THE DOCTRINE OF THE SOUL IN THE THOUGHT OF PLOTINUS AND ORIGEN

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PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to explore analytically the idea of the soul in the thought of Origen (A.D. 185-254) and of Plotinus (A.D. 204-270), and to explore the relationship between these two doctrines. Background for the study will be supplied by first sketching briefly the problem of the soul as it was treated by two significant representatives of the revived Platonism of the time whose views influenced those of Origen and Plotinus.

Origen and Plotinus were products of the eclectic intellectual environment of the Egyptian metropolos of Alexandria, in the third century A.D. Both shared the Platonic tradition of that time--a Platonism which had absorbed the teaching of Aristotle, the Stoics and the Neo-Pythagoreans, and is commonly known as Middle or Revived Platonism. In fact, it is believed that both men, but at different times, attended the lectures of Ammonius Saccas, who laid the foundation for the Neo-Platonic school. Although both men shared a common Platonic tradition, it appeared in a different form in the writings of each. Origen, the defender of

Christianity, recast it into a Christian mold, while Plotinus, a pagan, recast it into a pagan form. Nevertheless, there is such a marked closeness in their thought that St. Augustine[1] remarked of Plotinus that by the change of a few words Plotinus could be considered a Christian; and the Neo-Platonist Porphyry[2] considered Origen a Greek philosopher who had defected to Christianity.

The idea of the individual soul--in its origin, its nature and its return by means of knowledge to unity with its divine source-- is basic to both philosophers. Both firmly believed that the individual human soul belongs to the world of intelligible reality, and both undertook the task, each in his own way, of presenting a means by which the individual soul of man could attain union with this Reality.

Their ideas helped to mold the philosophical thought of many mystics and philosophers, both pagan and Christian, who came after them. Origen's views of the individual soul had a lasting influence on the thought of Christian thinkers, both Eastern and Western, who succeeded him. His doctrine of the soul made an important contribution to the subsequent Christian understanding of man's destiny and salvation. Given the significance of Origen's views of the soul to the Christian thought of man, it is important that his doctrine be thoroughly explored and compared with other contemporary non-Christian Platonic philosophers such as Plotinus. In addition, it is important to discern the way in which Middle and Neo-Platonic ideas are used and modified by Origen. Where Origen's and Plotinus' thoughts diverge, it should be determined to what extent the difference is due to Origen's understanding of the requirements of the Christian faith. This study proposes to examine these important factors and to illuminate the philosophical context in which Origen worked by exploring these two versions of the Platonic doctrine of the soul.

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[1] Epist. 118; De Vera Religione, 12.

[2] Eus. Hist. Eccl. VI. 19:7.

PART I

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

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Chapter I

MIDDLE PLATONISM

A. Introduction

The first centuries of the Christian era were a time of great transition and unrest. It was a period in which the values by which the ancient world had lived were steadily being uprooted. By the middle of the second century of the present era, the Roman Empire was witnessing a succession of barbarian invasions, bloody civil wars, various recurring plagues, famines and economic crises. Moreover, the cosmopolitanism of the Empire, the fusion of races, customs, cultures and religions, was gradually destroying the State religion, which had served as the basis of political, social and intellectual life. This was a period of general material and moral insecurity. The unsettling conditions of the period led men to long and search for "soteria"--salvation--a release from the burdens of finitude, the misery and failure of human life. During this period the mystery religions enjoyed great popularity. These cults with their purification rites, their enthusiasm and ecstasy and their rewards of immortality through deification, offered a solution to the spiritual needs of the people. Philosophy also was attempting to meet these needs. The skepticism of Epicureanism and the austere ideals of Stoicism, which had a

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great influence on the lives of the intellectuals for more than four centuries, were no longer adequate to satisfy the religious longings of men at this time. The result was a return to Platonism, for men believed that they found in the teaching of Plato, especially in the teachings of the Timaeus and the Phaedo, a philosophy which satisfied their religious needs. The Platonic revival, which had begun on a modest scale in the latter part of the first century B.C., produced by the second century of the present era a philosophical movement which gained great prominence and which historians have called Middle Platonism. The chief objective of the movement was to solve the problem of man's destiny and salvation through a philosophical system of the universe. Although fundamentally inspired by the teachings of Plato, Middle Platonism also combined elements of Aristotelian logic, Stoic psychology and ethics and Pythagorean mysticism in varying degrees by different philosophers of the time. However, despite its loosely knit and highly diversified character, there exists some degree of uniformity in Middle Platonic speculation, which makes some general remarks about it possible. Their most significant contribution to the history of philosophy and theology was to bring together and equate the supreme Divine Mind of Aristotle and the Platonic world of Forms and Ideas.

Middle Platonism postulates a hierarchy of three divine

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primary beings, at the head of which is the Divine Mind or God--the first principle of reality. The supreme God is often called the One or the Good and is a simple, changeless and transcendent being, having no direct contact with the material world and inaccessible to the human mind in this life, except in rare and brief flashes of illumination. In the supreme Mind, the Middle Platonists placed the Platonic ideas, the eternal forms which, according to Plato, constitute the archetypal models of all existing things in the universe. These forms or patterns exist eternally in the mind of the first God and are the models upon which the cosmos is created. Being unchanging and transcendent, the Supreme God does not create. He derives from himself a second Mind or God, subordinate to and dependent on the first God, who creates and governs the world. The third principle in the Middle Platonic hierarchy is the World Soul. According to the Middle Platonists, human souls are parts of the Divine, who have descended into the material world and have become embodied. Thus, the object of man's life is to free himself from the world of matter and return to his place in the Divine. This conception of man's life and destiny had a significant influence on later philosophic thought, pagan and Christian.

Two of the most important adherents of Middle Platonism whose works were known and read both by Origen and Plotinus are Numenius of Apamea and Albinus.[1] A brief account of their views of the soul is important, as they reflect the general philosophical substratum of the period, the environment in which the thoughts of Origen and Plotinus were formed.

B. Numenius

Numenius of Apamea (C. A.D. 160-180) emphasized the Pythagorean element in Plato, and for this reason he is often classed as a neo-Pythagorean. It is, however, more correct to regard him as a Pythagoreanizing Platonist. Numenius adopted a synthesis of Platonic and Pythagorean doctrines. These doctrines he used as basic teachings and then attempted to show how other ancient traditions, such as those of the Brahmins, Hebrews, Magi and Egyptians, also agreed with these teachings. He then claimed that these doctrines are the true source of all philosophy.[2] Even under favorable conditions it is impossible to reformulate without distortion the thought of any individual, particularly from the ancient world. There is an added burden in the case of Numenius in that only fragments of his works and secondary reports of his views are known.

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[1] Porphyry tells us that the works of Numenius were read in Plotinus' seminars (Life, Ch. 14), and Origen alludes to Numenius several times in the Contra Celsum and quotes him explicitly four times (Cels. I. 15; IV. 51; V. 7, 57). An analysis of the resemblance of various views of Origen and Plotinus with those found in the works of Albinus, as well as several verbal echoes of Albinus found in the works of both Origen and Plotinus, have led scholars to believe that Albinus was well-known and most likely read by both these men. A. H. Armstrong, "That the Intelligibles are not Outside the Intellect," Entretiens Hardt, Tome V: Les Sources de Plotin (Vandoeuvres-Geneve, 1960), p. 405ff.; J. Danielou, Origen, trans. W. Mitchell (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955) pp. 95-98.

In agreement with the Middle Platonic thought, Numenius posits a divine triad, a supreme Mind or God whom he calls Father or the Good,[3] a second mind or Demiurge[4] and the created third God or the World Soul.[5] However, the members of Numenius' triad are not three clearly defined hypostases as is found in the thought of Plotinus. As Dodds so well expresses it, Numenius' second principle, the second mind or demiurge, possesses an "ambiguous doubleness".[6] According to Numenius, the second and third

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[2] Fr. 9a, b. The fragments of Numenius cited in this study are from the edition by E. A. Leemans, Studie over den wijsgeer Numenius van Apamea met uitgave der fragmenten, Memoires de l'Academie Royale de Belgique, classe des lettres, Vol. 37, pt. 2 (Bruxelles: Palais des Academies, 1937), pp. 3-171. I have followed Mr. Leemans' numbering, and have used T. to indicate the testimonia and Fr. for the fragments.

[3] T. 24; Fr. 25.

[4] Fr. 20; T. 24.

[5] Ibid.

[6] E. R. Dodds, "Numenius and Ammonius," Entretiens Hardt, Tome V: Les Sources de Plotin (Vandoeuvres-Geneve, 1960), p. 20.

Gods are one.[7] The second God performs the functions of both the second and third Gods.

The first God, or the Good, is simple, eternal, changeless, transcendent and at leisure, i.e., he concerns himself only with the intelligible universe and takes no active part in the formation or affairs of the sensible world.[8] From his essence, without diminishing it in any way,[9] is derived the Demiurge who participates in the activities of both the spiritual and phenomenal worlds. He contemplates the Good, but he is also interested in bringing order and structure into matter.[10] Because of his double interest, he is double or towfold διττός;[11] for although the Demiurge effects order out of the chaotic nature of matter, he is distracted by matter and his interest is divided.[12] Thus, a part of the Demiurge is always in contemplation of the Good and the other part is concerned with the creation and governance of the World. He receives the ideas and guidance from his contemplation of the Good.[13] The creating part of the Demiurge becomes the soul of the material world.[14] Numenius taught that there are two world-souls. The contemplating part of the Demiurge is the good world-soul. The lower or creating part, because it concerns itself exclusively with matter, which according to Numenius is evil, is considered the evil world-soul. This soul is in constant opposition to Providence or the good world-soul, which strives to perfect matter.[15] Therefore, Numenius, agreeing with the Pythagorean view, claims that the sensible world was created by a mingling of matter and divinity, of Providence and chance.[16] It was a result of the yielding of matter to the persuasion of God.[17]

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[7] ὁ θεὸς μέντοι ὁ δεύτερος καὶ τρίτος ἐστὶν εἷς Fr. 20.

[8] Fr. 21, 24.

[9] Fr. 23.

[10] Fr. 20, 27.

[11] T. 24.

[12] σχίζεται δὲ ὑπ’αὐτῆς Fr. 20.

Regarding Numenius' psychology, the information that is available is primarily from incomplete accounts and secondary transcripts of his texts, and thus only a brief outline of his doctrine can be derived. According to available sources, Numenius believed that man's soul is a divine being, a fragment or particle of the Demiurge,[18] indistinguishably identical with its source.[19] It contains within itself the whole intelligible world, the gods, the demons, the Good and all prior kinds of Being.[20] Like their source, all souls are immortal.[21] Individual souls are drawn to the material world and into bodies by the same desire to bring matter (ὕλη, φύσις)[22] into structure and order, which characterizes the activity of the second divinity.[23] However, since Numenius believes that matter is evil, any involvement of the soul with matter is considered by him an evil act.[24] Similar to the Demiurge, the individual soul is double or twofold. It is a part of the intelligible world, a particle of the Demiurge, and it is also concerned with bringing structure and order to matter. Numenius defines it as a number, a divine form or idea in movement, half-way between nature and what is beyond nature, indivisible in that it is a monad, divisible in that it is a dyad.[25] Thus, according to Numenius, man possesses two souls, a rational and an irrational soul.[26] The rational soul, which is man's nous, is derived from God or the second divinity. However, unlike the lower or creating world soul, the irrational part, which contains the various faculties of man, is caused by matter, which Numenius considers as the author and mistress of the irrational soul.[27] The irrational or lower soul is acquired by the higher soul or nous during the descent to earth, and appears in Numenius' view as the acquisition of a vaporous envelope from the planets, which accumulates around nous.[28]

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[13] Fr. 25, 27.

[14] Fr. 20.

[15] T. 30:17, 35.

[16] Porro ex deo et silva factus est iste mundus; item providentiae fortunaeque; T. 30:16, 17.

[17] ex qua (silva) et deo mundi machinam constitisse, deo persuadente, necessitate obsecundante T. 30:18.

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[18] Fr. 22.

[19] ἕνωσιν μὲν οὖν καὶ ταὐτότητα ἀδιάκριτον τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς τὰς ἑαυτῆς ἀρχὰς T. 34.

[20] ἐν τῆ μεριστῇ ψυχῇ τὸν νοητὸν κόσμον καὶ θεοὺς καὶ δαίμονας καὶ τἀγαθὸν καὶ πάντα τὰ πρεσβύτερα ἐν αὐτῇ ἐνιδρύουσι T. 33.

[21] πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἀθάνατος T. 39.

[22] Fr. 20.

[23] Fr. 20, 27; T. 46, 51.

[24] τὰς ἐνσωματώσεις τῶν ὅλων κακὰς τε εἶναι πάσας T. 40.

Numenius' doctrine of the descent and ascent of the soul seems to have been inspired by the various myths found in the works of Plato, and especially the myth of Er found in Plato's tenth book of the Republic. Interpreting these myths allegorically, Numenius formulated a cosmological system into which he fitted the mythical representations of the soul's sojourn in the world. According to the available testimonies, Numenius believed that the soul descends from heaven, which is for him the sphere of the fixed stars, through its northern gate--the Tropic of Cancer.[29] From there it travels through the spheres of the seven planets. Between the gate of heaven and the first planetary sphere, each soul, in varying degrees, loses the memory of its existence in the intelligible world. As it passes through each of the planetary spheres, it develops characteristics which take it further and further away from the divine. In each sphere it acquires an ethereal envelopment or layer (aetheria obvolutio)[30] and the disposition peculiar to each planet. Passing through Saturn's sphere, the soul receives reason and understanding, λογιστικόν and θεωρητικόν; in Jupiter's sphere it receives the ability to act or πρακτικόν; in Mars' sphere, its boldness or θυμικόν; in the sun's sphere, sense-perception and imagination, known as αἰσθητικόν and φανταστικόν; in the sphere of Venus, its impulse of passion, ἐπιθυμητικόν; in Mercury's sphere it obtains the ability to speak and interpret, ἑρμηνευτικόν; and in the sphere of the moon, the function of molding and increasing bodies, φυτικόν.[31] This last faculty or function being the farthest removed from the divine, is the first in man and in all earthly things. In other words, the "phytikon" faculty or bodily nature is the first substance of the earthly creature.[32] After the lunar sphere the soul enters the earth, where it receives the last touches or layers of its earthly garment--the body.[33] After the death of the body, the soul, in order to become completely purified and ready to be reunited with the divine, must traverse again the path through the planetary spheres and give back to each planet that which it received on its journey downward. However, in these spheres sit judges who await the soul as it ascends in order to review its life on earth and decide its fate. If it is found worthy, it is permitted to ascend to heaven through its southern gate--the Tropic of Capricorn--and to live among the gods in eternal bliss. If, on the other hand, it is found wanting, it is sent down to a region of chastisement, the atmosphere between the moon and the earth, which Numenius calls the region above the waters.[34] There it hovers, tormented by and struggling with the physical demons, until it is once again attracted toward a new body.[35] The body which the soul assumes in its reincarnation depends on the faculty which it had developed the most in its previous incarnation.[36] It is possible for the soul, by choosing to follow the dictates of the body rather than those of reason, to become so corrupted by it that in the next incarnation it would be compelled to become assimilated to an irrational creature.[37] Eventually, however, the soul is released from the cycle of birth. After a series of repeated generations or incarnations (ἐφεξῆς γενέσεως)[38] it is finally purified and returns once again to its place in the divine.[39]

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[25] T. 31.

[26] Ἄλλοι δὲ, ὧν Νουμήνιος... δύο φυχὰς ἔχειν ἡμᾶς οἴονται, τὴν μὲν λογικήν, τὴν δὲ ἄλογον T. 36

[27] Quae (silva) quidem etiam patibilis animae partis. . .auctrix est et partona, sicut rationabilis animae pars auctore utitur ratione ac DeoT. 30:16.

[28] T. 35, 47. Our sources indicate that Numenius sometimes conceived of the soul as threefold: the rational (λογικόν) which is man's nous; the irrational (ἄλογον), man's perceptive faculty; and the vegetative (φυτικόν), the passions. T. 39; Fr. 16.

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[29] T. 42, 43.

[30] T. 47:12.

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[31] T. 47:12.

[32] _Ibid_.

[33] T. 47:11.

Numenius regards incarnation as evil and as a fall of the soul.[40] It brings the soul into contact with matter, and matter is considered by Numenius as evil and the cause of all that is evil in the world.[41] Although incarnation is regarded by Numenius as a fall of the soul, nonetheless he implies that it is a necessity. It is necessary for the maintenance and organization of the body, without which it would disperse and scatter into atoms.[42] Numenius calls the soul the savior of the body, its divinity; it animates and holds together the changeable, inconstant and infinitely divisible body during life. Being immortal, the soul separates itself from the body after death.[43] From the functions of the soul, Numenius argues, the soul must be immaterial or incorporeal, indivisible and unchangeable. If it did not possess these qualities, it would require a still more profound principle to vivify it and bring it into order.[44] Further proof of the soul's incorporeality can be shown by the fact that the soul, when fed or nourished, is nourished from the incorporeal sciences, the mathematical sciences.[45] It receives knowledge of them from the Divinity, the first

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[34] T. 42, 46.

[35] T. 49.

[36] T. 41.

[37] καὶ γὰρ πρὸ τοῦ σώματος κακίας ἐμπίμπλασθαι τὴν ψυχὴν δύνατόν εἶναι λέγουσι καὶ τοῖς ἀλόγοις ἐξεικάζεσθαι ᾧ γοῦν ὡμοιώθη T. 41.

[38] T. 45, 47:12.

[39] Ibid.

[40] T. 40.

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[41] T. 30:16, 17.

[42] παραλυόμενον ϰαὶ σϰιδνάμενον Fr. 13.

[43] Fr. 13; T. 29, 39.

[44] Fr. 13; T. 29.

[45] ῎Ετι [δὲ] ἡ φυχὴ εἰ μὲν τρέφεται, ὑπὸ ἀσωμάτου τρέφεται, τὰ γὰρ μαθήματα τρέφει αὐτὴν ·T. 29.

God, in a manner similar to that of a candle which is kindled by a greater candle without extinguishing it.[46]

Numenius held a pessimistic view of life in the world of sense. He conceived of it as a long, hard battle,[47] with the two souls of men in constant conflict to gain dominance.[48] Peace and happiness can be attained only when the soul leaves the world of sense and achieves its final relation to the Good, alone with the alone.[49] The approach to the Good is not easy, but extraordinarily difficult. While the soul is still in the body, this approach can best be accomplished by detaching itself completely from everything sensible, vigorously pursuing the mathematical sciences, contemplating the numbers. After intense waiting and concentration, it arrives at the understanding of what is true reality.[50]

The preceding passage is strongly reminiscent of Plotinus' key formulation of the soul's mystical union with the Divine, the flight of the alone to the alone.[51] However, except for Prof. Festugiere, most scholars think that there is no mystical element in this or any other fragment of Numenius.[52] Because of the fragmentary knowledge of his thought, certainty in the case of either view is not possible.

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[46] Fr. 23, 24.

[47] μάχη T. 35.

[48] T. 35, 45.

[49] οὔτω δεῖ τινα ἀπελθόντα πόῤῥω ἀπὸ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ὁμιλῆσαι τῷ ἀγαθῶ μόνῳ μόνον Fr. 11; also T. 45.

[50] Τῷ γὰρ ὄντι οὐ ῥαδίος, θείας δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ δεῖ μεθόδου· καὶ ἔστι κράτιστον, τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀμελήσαντι νεανιευσαμένῳ πρὸς τὰ μαθήματα, τοὺς ἀριθμοὺς θεασαμένῳ, οὕτως ἐκμελετῆσαι μάθημα, τί ἔστι τὸ ὄν Fr. 11.

C. Albinus

Another representative of second-century eclectic Platonism is Albinus. A contemporary of Numenius, he was a pupil of Gaius of Athens and later taught Galen in Smyrna (A.D. 151/2). The doctrines of Albinus are better known than those of Numenius. There are available two complete works of Albinus, the *Prologue* or *Isagoge*, which is an introduction to the works of Plato, and the *Epitome* or *Didascalicus*, purported to be an abstract or summary of Plato's main doctrines.[53] The latter is in the form of a textbook, thus providing an account of the views and opinions prevalent during the second century.

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[51] φυγὴ μόνου πρὸς μόνον Plotinus, *Enn*. VI. 9:11.

[52] E. R. Dodds, "Numenius and Ammonius," *Entretiens Hardt*, Tome V: *Les Sources de Plotin* (Vandoeuvres-Geneve, 1960), p. 23; P. Merlan, "The Pythagoreans," *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1967), pp. 101-102.

[53] The texts of Albinus used in this study are from the edition of C. F. Hermann, *Platonis Dialogi*, VI. (Lipsiae: B. G. Tuebner, 1904), pp. 147-189, and are indicated as *Did*. for the *Didascalicus* and *Prol*. for the *Prologue*.

Albinus represents an Aristotelianizing form of Platonism, i.e., he interpreted Plato by means of Aristotle's logic and terminology. To this combination he also added several Stoic doctrines. In similar fashion to Numenius, Albinus postulates three divine principles: the first God or Mind, whom he also calls the Good; the second God or Universal Intellect; and the World-Soul. As in Numenius, Albinus does not make a clear distinction between the second God and the World-Soul. 'The first God in Albinus' triad is identified both with the Good of Plato's Republic and the First Mover of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*; he is "forever thinking upon himself" and is "identical with his own ideas", the intelligible ideas, which are exemplary causes or paradigms of all existing things.[54] The first God is the cause and father of all things,[55] actualizing and bringing into effective existence the other two divine principles--the Cosmic Mind (οὐράνιος νοῦς)[56] and the World-Soul--by awakening them, as it were, from a deep sleep and turning them towards himself. In other words, the Cosmic Mind and World-Soul were not created by God, nor do they emanate from him. They are formed and made active and useful entities by the first God by his turning them in contemplation towards himself and his acts or thoughts.[57] Although the Good causes movement by being an object of desire, he himself is unmoved, remaining beyond space, the supra-cosmic (ὑπερουράνιος) mind or nous.[58] In describing the Good, Albinus states that he is eternal, incorporeal, perfect in himself, transcendent, ineffable and beyond all human thought, comprehended only by the mind alone.[59] His transcendence of thought is expressed by Albinus through the use of a crude and undeveloped "negative theology"--describing God by stating what he is not rather than what he is--similar to that used to describe the First Hypothesis in Plato's Parmenides. However, despite his remote transcendence, Albinus' first God is not the supra-cosmic, unknowable Absolute of Plotinus. His first God is still a nous, the head of the hierarchy of being, not beyond it.

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[54] *Did*. 10:20-21.

[55] πατὴρ δέ ἐστι τῷ αἴτιος εἶναι πάντων *Did*. 10:20.

[56] *Ibid*.

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[57] τὸν οὐράνιον νοῦν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ κόσμου πρὸς ἑαυτὸν καὶ πρὸς τὰς ἑαυτοῦ νοήσεις Did. 10:20; also 14:25.

[58] Did. 10:20; 28:37.

[59] ἄρρητος δ'ἔστι καὶ τῷ νῷ μόνῳ ληπτὸς Did. 10:21.

Albinus posits the world as eternal, as having no temporal beginning, and as being perpetually formed and governed by the second God, the active universal mind. The second God is set in motion by the desire for the first God. Like the first God, the second God is identical with his ideas or patterns. This second Mind or God Albinus closely associates with the World-Soul and sometimes even identifies him with it. Albinus never clearly distinguishes between the World-Nous and the World-Soul. In fact, he never clearly or coherently presents the relationship and distinction between the three divine principles. In a manner similar to Numenius, Albinus divides the world into spheres: the celestial sphere, or the sphere of the fixed stars, the seven planetary spheres, and the earth. Each of these spheres is inhabited by intelligible living beings, souls. The most perfect are those of the fixed stars and of the planets and are considered by Albinus as gods.[60] In Stoic fashion, he states that they were created by God from a fiery-like substance.[61] Below the planetary spheres, in the atmosphere and on the earth, are subordinate gods or demons, both visible and invisible, whom Albinus calls "begotten gods".[62] There is a god for each of the four elements, so that no part of the world is without a soul. To these gods, the offspring of the Demiurge,[63] was committed the ordering and guidance of the sublunary world and the creation (ποίησις) of all mortal beings, the creatures of the air, of the water and of the earth.[64] Albinus also attributes to them the giving of oracles and dreams. The human race belongs to the category of the creatures of the earth, but it is so closely related to the divine that the creator God took a special interest in its creation. The moulding or fashioning (πλάσις)[65] of the human body was assigned to the subordinate gods, but the soul of man was formed (ἐκοσμεῖτο) by God. Like the Soul of the World, the individual souls were not created. They were formed or brought into order and made active by God's turning them in contemplation towards himself and his acts.[66] After putting into order the individual souls, he sent them down to their earthly habitations.[67]

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[60] πάντες δὲ οὗτοι νοερὰ ζῷα καὶ θεοὶ Did. 14:27.

[61] ὁ θεὸς δημιουργῆσας---ἐκ πυρῶδους τῆς πλείστης οὐσίας Ibid.

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[62] οὓς καὶ καλοίη ἄν τις γεννήτους θεοὺς Did. 15:27.

[63] τοῖς ἐκγόνοι αὑτοῦ θεοῖς Did. 16:27.

[64] Did. 15; 16.

[65] Did. 17:28.

[66] Did. 10:21; 14:25; 16:27, 28.

[67] Did. 16:28.

Albinus' doctrine of the human soul is vague and incoherent. He appears not to be aware of the difficulties within his thought. While offering two main reasons for the soul's embodiment, he appears to be unaware of any need to reconcile their seeming incompatibility. Incarnation, he claims, is due either to a law of nature established by the divine, or to a voluntary action on the part of the soul--its licentiousness or love for the body. There is a very strong affinity between body and soul, like fire and asphalt.[68] In chapter 16 of the *Didascalicus*, Albinus states that the souls are sent down to earth by God.[69] First he sends them to the celestial sphere, where he allots to each a star and sets them in it as in a chariot (ὄχημα).[70] There he explains to them all the laws of destiny: when the soul enters the body, there are attached to it (προσφύσεται) the mortal passions (θνητὰ πάθη) which are bound up with the nature of the body, and it is these passions which are the cause of the soul's subsequent evils. It is the responsibility of each soul to master these passions and thus, upon the death of the body, to return to its allotted star. Those souls who do not completely rid themselves of the passions are reincarnated into the bodies of women, and if they continue to be dominated by the senses are, in their succeeding lives, embodied in the bodies of wild beasts. However, in chapter 25, another view is presented. Here Albinus claims that the human soul in its disembodied state is god-like, possessing the same faculties as the souls of the gods. It possesses the discerning or judging faculty (τὸ κριτικόν or γνωστικόν), the impelling (τὸ ὁρμητικὸν or παραστατικόν), by which Albinus seems to mean the power of an individual soul to to move from place to place, and the conative (οἰκειωτικόν) faculty.[71] The term οἰκειωτικὸν was adopted from the Stoic term οἰκείωσις, which, according to the Stoics, was the fundamental instinct or tendency or self-love or self-preservation.[72]

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[68] *Did*. 25:34. There is a third possible reason for the soul's embodiment mentioned by Albinus; the souls become incarnate ἀριθμοὺς μενούσας . This is a vague, unintelligible phrase whose meaning is difficult to determine in the context. P. Merlan suggests that perhaps the phrase should read ἀριθμοὺς μὲν οὔσας ; souls descend into bodies because they are numbers. P. Merlan, "The Later Academy and Platonism," *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: the University Press, 1967), p. 67 n. 2.

[69] κατέπεμψεν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν τὰς τούτου τοῦ γένους [ἀνθρώπων] ψυχὰς ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός *Did*. 16:28.

[70] *Ibid*.

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[71] *Did.* 25:34.

The soul retains these faculties even after its embodiment; the judging faculty remains unchanged, but the other two undergo a transformation, taking on an irrational character. The appropriating faculty is changed into the desiring one (ἐπιθυμητικόν), and the impelling into that of anger (θυμοειδὲς). In this instance, nothing is added to the soul. It merely undergoes a slight transformation.[73] Therefore, the soul, in order to return to the intelligible world, must improve the two irrational faculties rather than eliminate them, as is advocated in chapter 16 of the *Didascalicus*.

Albinus' strong adherence to the Platonic tradition causes him to describe the human soul as having three parts (τριμερῆς), divided according to its powers (κατὰ τὰς δυνάμεις).[74] However, he prefers to speak of the soul as having two parts, a rational and an irrational part. The former is concerned with the supra-sensible, the latter with the sensible.[75] As in Numenius,[76] the two parts of the soul are always at war with each other,[77] but Albinus does not take as pessimistic a view of the material world. He does not posit the existence of an evil World-Soul, nor does he explicitly identify matter and evil. Concerning the nature of the soul, Albinus claims that the rational part is divine, eternal, immortal, indestructible and incorporeal. His arguments regarding the properties of the rational soul are basically Platonic. He maintains that the soul is divine because it was formed or put in order by the first God.[78] According to Albinus, following Plato, the soul existed before it entered the body and will remain after the body's death. Thus, it can be assumed that it is eternal, immortal and indestructible.[79]

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[72] F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. I, pt. 2; *Greece and Rome*, Image Books (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1946), pp. 143-144, 199.

[73] μεταβολὴν λαμβάνουσιν *Did*. 25:34.

[74] *Did*. 24:32.

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[75] φυχὴ....φύσει δὲ χωρίζεται τὸ παθητικὸν καὶ λογιστικόν, εἴ γε τὸ μὲν περὶ τὰ νοητά ἐστι, τὸ δὲ περὶ τὰ λυπηρὰ καὶ ἡδέα...... *Did*. 24:32, also 23:32.

[76] T. 35, 45.

[77] εὑρίσκεται γὰρ μαχόμενα ἀλλήλοις *Did*. 24:32.

[78] *Did*. 23:32.

[79] *Did*. 25:33.

Furthermore, he claims that as an animating or life-giving and ruling principle, the soul itself cannot receive death. Again, if it is immortal, then it follows that it would also be indestructible.[80] Another proof of the soul's immortality is based on the fact that learning is but a remembering, a recollection of things previously known.[81] That the soul is incorporeal may be demonstrated by the fact that it is unchangeable in substance, perceptible by the mind, invisible and simple, unable at any time to be dissolved or dispersed.[82] Albinus firmly asserts that the irrational part of the human soul, as well as the souls of all irrational animals, is mortal.[83] Its mortality is attributed to the circumstance that it was not formed or put in order, like the rational part, by the first God, but by the subordinate gods begotten by him.[84] The view that the souls of animals are mortal is incompatible with the doctrine of transmigration or metensomatosis, which Albinus accepts as a truly Platonic idea, but he makes no attempt to reconcile the two views. As Witt[85] has pointed out, it is difficult to see how a human soul that has descended into the form of an animal can escape the mortal doom which all irrational souls experience.

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[80] *Ibid*.

[81] *Did*. 25:33, 34.

[82] *Did*. 25:33.

[83] *Did*. 16:27, 28; 25:34.

[84] φυχὴν γὰρ παραλαβόντες ἀνθρωπίνην ἀθάνατον οὖσαν, ὡς δείξομεν, παρὰ τοῦ πρώτου θεοῦ οἱ τὰ θνητὰ γένη δημιουργοῦντες θεοὶ δύο αὐτῇ προσέθεσαν μέρη θνητά... *Did*. 23:32.

The idea of the soul as a unified being consisting of separate faculties which are part of the whole is not found in the thought of Albinus. According to him, the soul is divided into two distinct, self-subsistent parts with each part lodged in a different part of the body. The rational part, which Albinus sometimes calls by the Platonic name of λογικόν and at other times by the Stoic ἡγεμονικόν, is confined to the head. The two faculties of the irrational part, that of desire (ἐπιθυμητικόν)

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[85] R. E. Witt, *Albinus and the History of Middle Platonism* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1937), p. 139.

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and that of anger (θυμοειδές), are localized in the liver and heart respectively.[86]

Adhering closely to the thought of Plato, Albinus states that man's aim in life should be to become as much like God as is humanly possible.[87] However, the God after whom man is to model himself is not the supreme God, for he is above and better than all virtue. The example for man to follow is the second God, the one who contemplates the first.[88] Assimilation to God is achieved through knowledge of him, which according to Albinus is attained in the following three ways: through the way of abstraction or negation, the way of analogy, and the way of eminence or gradual ascent, which is accomplished through contemplation (θεωρία).[89] The way to the contemplative state is reached through the perfection or purification of the soul, i.e., the practice of the cardinal virtues. Albinus identifies the virtues, assigning a different one to each part of the soul. Prudence, he claims, is the perfection of the rational part of the soul,[90] temperance or self-control that of the desiring faculty, and courage that of the faculty of anger. The fourth virtue, justice, is the general virtue. It is the power which brings together and harmonizes the three parts of the soul and brings them under the influence of reason. Thus, all three virtues must be practised sumultaneously, for only in this way can the soul be completely purified.[91]

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[86] Did. 23:32.

[87] ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν Did. 28:37.

[88] οὖν τῇ ἀρχῇ τὸ τέλος εἴη ἂν τὸ ἐξομοιωθῆναι θεῷ, θεῷ δηλονότι τῷ ἐπουρανίῳ, μὴ τῷ μὰ Δία ὑπερουρανίῳ ὃς οὐκ ἀρετὴν ἔχει, ἀμείνων δ᾽ ἐστὶ ταύτης... Did. 28:37; also Prol. 6:6.

[89] Did. 10:21.

Albinus accepts the doctrine of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ. In the *Prologos*, he states that by reading the *Timaeus* we shall be able to clearly behold the things divine.[92] Those who choose to follow Plato ought to become contemplators (θεαταί) and obtain the vision of their own souls, of things divine, of the gods themselves and of the highest or most beautiful mind (ὁ κάλλιστος νοῦς).[93] However, there is no trace of mysticism in Albinus' works. They reveal no sign of a personal mysticism--the soul's awareness of the divine and communion with it.

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[90] τοῦ λογιστικοῦ μέρους τελειότης ἐστὶν ἡ φρόνησις *Did*. 29:38.

[91] *Ibid*.

[92] *Prol*. 5:6.

[93] *Prol*. 6:6.

Numenius and Albinus anticipated several of Plotinus' and Origen's views and positions. In their views of the soul are found the rudiments of a number of concepts which were more fully developed and systemetized in different ways by Plotinus and Origen. Some of these concepts constitute an important part of their thought.

PART II

PLOTINUS' DOCTRINE OF THE SOUL

Chapter II

THE ORIGIN AND DESCENT OF THE SOUL

Plotinus studied the various thoughts and views of his predecessors, Aristotle, the Stoics, the Neo-Pythagoreans, the Middle Platonists and especially those of Plato. He carefully analyzed them, discarded some, developed and reinterpreted others and produced a profoundly original philosophy, more coherent and systematic than his immediate predecessors, the Middle Platonists. His philosophy is an attempt to give an accurate and objective view of the cosmos, which he represents as a "great chain of being"--a continuous chain of living realities which emanate eternally from the first principle, the One, descend through Nous and the Forms within it to the World Soul and to the last and lowest bodily forms. It is also a careful explication of the individual soul's ascent to the One, which is the main goal of Plotinus' thought. In his attempt to integrate these two accounts, Plotinus often creates a tension in his thought which he never fully reconciles. This is especially true in his evaluation of the soul's descent into body and in the soul's freedom of choice while in the body.

Like the Middle Platonists, Plotinus postulates three divine principles; the One (τὸ ἕν, τὸ πρῶτον, τὸ ἀγαθόν), Universal Intelligence (νοῦς) and World Soul (ψυχὴ τοῦ παντός or τῶν ὅλων). Unlike his immediate predecessors, however, Plotinus makes each a separate and distinct hypostasis. He also elevates his first principle, the One, beyond mind or being, and thus beyond all activity and thought.[94] The One, to him, is absolutely transcendent; an absolute unity, eternally perfect, infinite and indivisible. Although it is the source of all things, it is none of these things. This does not mean that the One is an unconscious formless nothing, but that it is more than these things,[95] more than anything man knows or is able to comprehend. For this reason Plotinus is reluctant to attribute any predicates to it. To do so is to limit and make it a particular thing which it is not. Even the term "One" is inadequate, but it is the best term available.[96] From the essence of the One, through the spontaneous outpouring of its energy or power, is produced the second principle or hypostasis, Universal Nous. This act of generation involves no thought, act of will or any type of movement on the part of the One.[97] It is conceived as a sort of emanation or radiation which Plotinus compares to the outpouring of light from the sun. Similar to the sun which experiences no change as a result of the outpouring of its power, the One remains untouched and unmoved by the emission of its substance.[98] The principle of emanation, cardinal in Plotinus' thought, was first explicitly formulated by Numenius and further developed by Plotinus.[99]

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[94] I. 7:1.

[95] τὸ ὑπερ πάντα ταῦτα εἶναι III. 8:9.

[96] V. 5:6.

It is Universal Nous, the second hypostasis, that, in the Plotinian system, is the highest and most perfect form of being. It is Nous that contains, or rather is, the totality of all being, the Forms or Ideas of all things in the universe; of all individuals and all classes of living things.[100] Nous first proceeds from the One as an indeterminate spiritual matter (ἀδριστος ὕλη),[101] or in the Platonic and Neopythagorean terms, as an indefinite dyad.[102] It then turns back upon the One in contemplation and becomes informed and limited, receiving all the entities which it contains,[103] i.e., Nous receives the power of the One in a multiple number of forms.[104] These archetypal forms exist within Nous as separate entities and as the whole.[105] That is to say, each is an eternally active mind which thinks and is the whole. The idea of the individual, eternally active thinking mind which is the whole, Plotinus adopted from Aristotle; nous is both subject and object.[106] Thus, the Plotinian Nous is a unity in multiplicity (αὐτὸς ἓν πολλά),[107] a world of individual minds or forms, each of which is the whole. As archetype of the material universe, container of the forms of all existing beings, Plotinus calls Nous the maker and demiurge of the universe (ποιητὴς καὶ δημιουργὸς τοῦ παντός),[108] but Nous is not the direct maker of the world. It is in no way concerned with the ordering or governing of the entities in the cosmos. This task is performed by the World Soul, the third divine hypostasis.

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[97] V. 1:6.

[98] I. 7:1; V. 1:6, 3:12; VI. 8:18, 9:9.

[99] E. R. Dodds, "Numenius and Ammonius," *Entretiens Hardt*, Tome V: *Les Sources de Plotin* (Vandoeuvres-Geneve, 1960), p. 23. In speaking of the Divinity, Numenius states that when it is communicated, and passes from one thing to another, it remains unalterably in its original state and loses nothing of what it gives (τὰ δὲ θεῖά ἐστιν οἷα μεταδοθέντα, ἐνθέν δε ἐκεῖθι γεγενημένα, ἐνθέν δε οὐκ ἀπελήλυθε.......... Fr. 23).

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[100] V. 7:1; VI. 7:12.

[101] II. 4:5

[102] ἀδριστος δύας V. 1:5.

[103] II. 4:5.

[104] ἄλλο ἀεὶ λαμβάνων ἐν αὐτῷ πληθυνδμενον V. 3:11.

[105] V. 9:8; VI. 5:6.

[106] _De Anima_ III. 4, 429b-430a.

The World Soul of Plotinus is basically the World Soul of Plato as found in the _Timaeus_ or the _Laws_, but more elaborate than in the Platonic doctrine. It fulfills the functions of both the second god of Numenius and the celestial mind of Albinus and of their world souls. To it Plotinus attributes the responsibility of ordering and governing the cosmos, and it is the World Soul which forms the connecting link; it is the intermediate, between the world of Nous and the sensible world. Soul emanates from Nous and turns back to it in contemplation in the same manner as Nous emanates and returns to the One; but there is a closer relationship between Soul and Nous. As an emanation of Nous, Soul is an image of it and less perfect than it. Unlike Nous which is eternally at rest and possesses all objects within itself simultaneously, the universal Soul possesses its beings not as a whole but one at a time in continuous stages, one following the other (τὸ ἄλλο μετ᾽ἄλλο).[109] Thus it is continually on the move, moving from one life to the other. This endless movement of the Soul from part to part Plotinus calls "time", and is, according to him, the life or act of the Soul in movement as it passes from one life to the other,[110] and the cause of all pnysical movement in time and space. In its incessant movement, Soul produces or generates an image of itself,[111] which simultaneously with time patterns and orders the material universe. Time, therefore, is the activity of that part of the Soul which is not turned towards itself nor within itself, but lies in creation and generation.[112] To the creative aspect of the cosmic Soul, Plotinus gives the name nature (φύσις) or logos.

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[107] V. 3:11.

[108] II. 3:18; V. 9:3.

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[109] III. 7:11.

[110] χρόνος....ψυχῆς ἐν κινήσει μεταβατικῇ ἐξ ἄλλου εἰς ἄλλου βίον ζωῆν εἶναι Ibid.

[111] ψυχὴ...κινηθεῖσα ἐγέννα εἴδωλον....V. 2:1.

Soul's movement in the production of the universe is, therefore, twofold. It at once contemplates Nous and perceives and is fulfilled by Nous, i.e., it is filled with all the Forms or Ideas found in Nous. It then proceeds in the opposite direction and generates an image of itself which penetrates the material universe, fashioning it and governing it.[113] Just as Soul turns its gaze upon Nous and produces, the logos or image of the Soul contemplates the higher soul and receives from it an image of the World Forms or Ideas which the higher part of the Soul had received from Nous as a result of its contemplation of Nous. The images of the World Forms found in the logos, Plotinus calls logoi spermatikoi, a Stoic expression but not used in a strictly Stoic sense. To him the term logos or logos spermatikos denotes an active, formative intelligible reality which, at a lower level, is an image or representative of a superior principle.[114] The Stoic and Plotinian logoi do, however, possess a common function; both act as creative and organizing principles of the sensible world. Thus, according to Plotinus, it is the logos in accordance with the logoi spermatikoi found within it that orders and patterns the cosmos. The creative activity of the logos is likened by Plotinus to the activity of the soul or mind of a craftsman which draws upon his craft for the plan of his work.[115]

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[112] χρόνος:...φυχῆς τινος ἀεὶ οὔσης ἐνέργεια, οὐ πρὸς αὐτὴν οὐδ᾽ἐν αὐτῇ, ἀλλ᾽ἐν ποιήσει καὶ γενέσειIII. 7:12.

[113] φυχὴ....βλέπουσα δὲ πρὸς μὲν τὸ πρὸ ἑαυτῆς νοεῖν.. εἰς δὲ τὸ μετ᾽αὐτὴν κοσμᾶ τε καὶ διοικεῖ ἄρχει αὐτοῦ... IV. 8:3; [φυχή]... ἐκεῖ μὲν οὖν βλέπουσα ὅθεν ἐγένετο, πληροῦται, προελθοῦσα δὲ εἰς κίνησιν ἄλλην καὶ ἐναντίαν γεννᾶ εἴδωλον αὐτῆς αἴσθησιν καὶ φύσιν τὴν ἐν τοῖς φυτοῖς. V. 2:1.

It has been said that the Plotinian logos is a fourth and distinct hypostasis.[116] This view is derived primarily from the treatises, On Providence (III. 2, 3), where Plotinus speaks of the logos as if it were a separate entity. This, however, is not the thought that Plotinus wishes to convey. It is merely his way of explaining and emphasizing in greater detail the function of the Soul's creative power. In his treatise, Against the Gnostics (II. 9), he clearly denies that there are more than three levels of reality, i.e., the One, Nous, and the World Soul.[117] Thus, the logos of the cosmic Soul is not a fourth hypostasis but its formative and creative power which organizes and animates the material universe and maintains it in the best possible order.

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[114] A. H. Armstrong, "Plotinus," *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1967), p. 252.

[115] φυχὴν δ᾽αὖ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς τέτρασι τὴν κόσμου μορφὴ δοῦναι· ταύτῃ δὲ νοῦν χορηγὸν τῶν λόγων γεγονέναι, ὥσπερ καὶ ταῖς τῶν τεχνιτῶν φυχαῖς παρὰ τῶν τεχνῶν τοὺς εἰς τὸ ἐνεργεῖν λόγουςV. 9:3.

[116] A. H. Armstrong, *The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1940), p. 102.

The creation and administration of the universe is a spontaneous act of the logos involving no deliberation, planning or willing.[118] Just as Soul emanates spontaneously from Nous as a result of Nous' contemplation of the One, so the cosmos is formed and administered by Soul as a result of its contemplation of Nous. Although Soul is the creator and administrator of the world, it remains apart from it. The World Soul never descends into the world of sense and change, is never confined by it, but timelessly illuminates and informs it, and it remains unchanged and unmoved at once immanent and transcendent. Plotinus compares the creation of the cosmos by Soul to the building of a stately mansion, whose architect never abandons it, but continuously beautifies it and gives it every possible care, yet is never tied down to it. The maintainence of the edifice never becomes a burden to its architect, who directs and presides over it from above.[119] Similarly, it is the cosmos that lies in Soul, not Soul in the cosmos; it is the cosmos that is mastered, not the master, is possessed, not the possessor.[120]

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[117] Οὐ τοίνυν δεῖ ἐφ'ἑτέρας ἀρχὰς ἰέναι, ἀλλὰ τοῦτο προστησαμένους, εἶτα νοῦν μετ'αὐτὸ καὶ τὸ νοοῦν πρώτως, εἶτα φυχὴν μετὰ νοῦν--αὕτη γὰρ τάξις κατὰ φύσιν--μήτε πλείω τούτων τίθεσθαι ἐν τῷ νοητῷ μήτε ἐλάττω.II. 9:1.

[118] λόγος....ποιεῖ οὐκ ἐπαυτῷ γνώμῃ οὐδὲ βουλὴν ἢ σκέφιν ἀναμείνασα..IV. 3:10.

Arguing against the Gnostic belief that the creation of the material universe was due to the fall of the World Soul and hence it is evil, Plotinus maintains that the cosmic Soul never left the intelligible universe, never entered into the activities of the cosmos, but merely illuminates it from above.[121] Elsewhere he states that the World Soul is incapable of sinning or committing an evil act.[122] The creation and governance of the universe is, for the Soul, an effortless overpowering (ὑπερέχουσα ἀπόνως).[123] Unlike that of the individual souls, its ministrance does not involve a reasoned successive discourse, but proceeds by a purely intellectual act--an instantaneous act of intellectual intuition that is exemplified in the artist's instantaneous conception of his project.[124] Thus, the creation of the cosmos is not the result of the Soul's arrogance (ἀλαζονείαν) and audacity (τόλμα) as the Gnostics claimed, but is the fulfillment of a necessary function according to the laws of nature. The material universe is not evil, it is the image of the intelligible universe and, although being an image it is inferior to its archetype, it is the best of all possible images.[125]

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[119] IV. 3:9.

[120] ὁ κόσμος....ἔχων ψυχὴν οὐχ αὑτοῦ ἀλλ' αὑτῷ, κρατούμενος, οὐ κρατῶν, καὶ ἐχόμενος ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔχων, κεῖται γὰρ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἀνεχούσῃ αὐτὸν καὶ οὐδὲν ἄμοιρόν ἐστιν αὐτῆς IV. 3:9.

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[121] II. 9:11.

[122] φυχῇ τῇ δὲ λεγομένῃ τοῦ παντὸς εἶναι τὸ μηδ'ἐν τῷ χεῖρονι ἔργῳ γεγονέναι ἀπαθεῖ δὲ κακῶν οὔσῃ θεωρίᾳ τε περινοεῖν τὰ ὑπ αὐτὴν ἐξηρτῆσθαίτε τῶν πρὸ αὐτῆς ἀεί IV. 8:7.

[123] IV. 8:8.

[124] *Ibid.*

Within the World Soul are found as logoi the individual souls of all existing beings.[126] These logoi or souls exist within the Soul, each as a separate entity with a character of its own, and yet all are in their total one being.[127] As a part of the universal Soul, the individual soul is incorporeal and eternal. In its pure state it is of equal rank with the World Soul and superior to everything material or corporeal.[128] It is subject to no change or to time, is without memory, self-consciousness or reflection, but it directly contemplates Nous. Being a logos, a creative principle, each individual soul at an appointed time in its existence declines (νεῦει) towards the material universe for the purpose of illiminating--giving life to that which does not live by prior right, i.e., to an object in the material universe.[129] At its appointed hour, each soul spontaneously, without choice or act of will, descends and enters or illiminates the body which best corresponds to its nature or disposition.[130] This does not mean that the individual soul breaks completely from the World Soul, but rather that it extends or radiates downward from it. The procession of the souls into the material universe is likened, by Plotinus, to the sun's rays which extend from their source into the universe, radiating to various habitations of men, yet remaining one and indivisible.[131] As parts of the undivided Soul, individual souls share a common feeling (συμπάθεια) with each other and with the Soul of the All. Thus, each soul's feelings and experiences are felt by the All and consequently by all the other souls.[132]

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[125] ὁ κόσμος....εἰκόνα ἐκείνου, ἥτις ἂν ἐγένετο ἄλλη καλλίων εἰκὼν ἐκείνου II. 9:4.

[126] φυχὴ....λόγους ἔχει...ἔχει δὲ καὶ θεῶν καὶ πάντων IV. 3:10.

[127] φυχὴ....μένειτε ἑκάστη ἓν καὶ ὁμοῦ ἓν πᾶσαι.. IV. 3:5.

[128] V. 1:2.

The individual souls first descend into the heavenly regions where they are clothed in an ethereal body.[133] From there each proceeds to the body best suited to it. When a pure soul reaches the heavenly regions, it immediately turns back in contemplation to the intelligible universe. As a result, these souls enter the bodies of celestial star-gods. Like the World Soul which is never burdened by the body--the cosmos that it illuminates--the souls of the celestial star-gods are never concerned with the care of the bodies which they illiminate and administer. The celestial star-god bodies in no way hamper the spiritual life of the souls which they embody.[134] For this reason, Plotinus regards their embodiment as a cosmological necessity carrying no trace of guilt. According to Plotinus, the majority of the souls, however, are not pure. They possess an audacity, an irrepressible desire to be independent of the universal Soul and live a life of their own--a voluntary inclination toward the material world. The descent of a soul into an earthly body is considered both as a fall and a necessity. It is a fall because the soul voluntarily, by an irrepressible internal force which Plotinus calls "tolma" (τόλμα), becomes separated from the perfection of the Whole and descends into a material body, which is devoid of all being and prone to evil. On the other hand, earthly embodiment is seen as a necessity; for it is a universal law in Plotinus' system that all things in the intelligible universe must also be represented in the world of sense.[135] In addition, soul must become incarnate in order to realize its own implicit powers and thus insure the government, life and ordering of the universe. In fact, Plotinus claims that soul without its powers developed would not really exist.[136] As Rich so well describes it, the embodiment of the soul is the "felix culpa" that is necessary to the divine economy.[137] Therefore, the soul's incarnation is not really a sin; it is no more a sin than is the casting of a shadow.[138]

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[129] IV. 8:2, 5; IV. 3:11.

[130] IV. 3:13.

[131] IV. 3:4.

[132] IV. 9:1.

[133] IV. 3:15.

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[134] IV. 8:2, 5; IV. 3:11.

There is a slight tension in Plotinus' thought regarding the descent of the soul. It appears that

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[135] IV. 8:1.

[136] οὐκ οὖσα, μηδέποτε ὄντως οὖσαν IV. 8:5.

[137] A. N. M. Rich, "Body and Soul in the Philosophy of Plotinus," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, I. (1963), p. 3.

[138] 'Αλλ' εἰ ἡ νεῦσις ἔλλαμφις πρὸς τὸ κάτω, οὐχ ἁμαρτία, ὥσπερ οὐδ' ἡ σκιά, ἀλλ' αἴτιον τὸ ἐλλαμπόμενον I. 1:12; also IV. 8:5.

Plotinus is attempting to make the "tolma" or voluntary act of the soul, which implies moral weakness and freedom of choice, compatible with his conception of the universe as an ordered structure of living realities, where everything that happens is a logical necessity in accordance with the laws of nature.

When an individual soul declines toward the material universe, it produces an image or logos of itself, a lower self or ego. It is this lower self which enters the material body and gives it form; and it is this composite (σύνθετον) which produces the various sensations in men and animals and the growth in plants.[139] The higher self or phase of the soul never comes into contact with the body, but remains always in the world of intellect, free and undisturbed by the cares of the body and of the material universe. It is its logos or reflection that illuminates and animates the body.[140] Against this background of conceptions, Plotinus can speak of each individual human being as an intelligible world,[141] i.e., man's soul is produced and administered by universal Nous and is able to keep in contact with its source. This is a very important concept in Plotinus' thought and the basis of his theoretical mysticism. As previously mentioned, a similar view regarding the human soul is expressed by Numenius.[142] It is safe to assume that Plotinus probably adopted the doctrine from him.

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[139] V. 2:1.

[140] I. 1:2.

[141] ἐσμὲν ἕκαστος κόσμος νοητός II. 4:3.

It is the responsibility of the individual soul, according to the laws of nature, to look towards the intelligible world and receive guidance and understanding. With the understanding that it receives, the soul is responsible to order, administer and govern the body to which it has been attracted. As long as a soul follows the dictates of Nous, or of its higher phase, there is no real wrong involved nor is the soul in danger of suffering any permanent harm. Sometimes, however, a soul becomes over zealous in its concern for the body; it is then that the actual sin occurs. The soul selfishly and exclusively devotes itself to the interests of the body, descending farther into the body, i.e., farther than the law of nature requires. Its close association with the body hinders its intellective act and fills it with pleasure, desire and pain, misfortunes which can never befall a soul that has never penetrated deeply into the body (εἰς τὸ εἴσω ἔδυ τοῦ σώματος)--a soul that is not enslaved to the body but rules over it like a sovereign.[143] If a souls remains in this state too long, i.e., intensely concerned with the care of the body, it eventually separates (ἀναχωρεῖ), becomes fragmented and is isolated (μονοῦται) from the whole. It is weakened and alone, concerned only with its own particular product. This self-isolation is, for Plotinus, the real fall of the soul, the "loss of its wings".[144] From that time on, the soul is no longer its own master, but has become a slave to the body, a prisoner jailed in a bodily cave.[145] To paraphrase Plotinus, the soul in this state is like the pilot of a ship who is so concerned with his vessel that he is weighed down and sinks with her.[146]

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[142] Numenius believed that the individual soul is indistinguishably one with its source or grounds (ἀρχαί), and that it contains within itself the intelligible world, the gods, the demons, the Good and all prior kinds of being. T. 33, 34; cf. p. 9 above.

The soul's deep penetration into the body means, in Plotinian thought, that the middle or discursive phase of the individual soul has been drawn towards the lower phase. Although Plotinus speaks in terms of a higher and lower soul, a higher soul and a logos, he really believes that the individual human soul is tripartite, that it has three main parts or phases; a purely intellectual or intuitive part which is always directed to the contemplation of the intelligible realities, an irrational or vegetative part which is concerned with the body and the things of this world, and a discursive phase which is midway between these two.[147] The intuitive part never comes into contact with the world of sense; the irrational and discursive, which are parts of the logos, constitute what is usually regarded as "man". This does not mean that the soul is divided into three separate parts. The soul is one nature, but it consists of various powers or levels, each of which is the whole.[148]

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[143] IV. 8:2.

[144] IV. 8:4.

[145] _Ibid_.

[146] IV. 3:17.

According to Plotinus, the middle part or level of the human soul is the most important, with regard to man's destiny. It is characteristic of the rational human being, man's reasoning faculty, the "we"--man's self. This part of the soul receives the activities of intellect from the upper soul or level, those of sensation and sense-perception from the lower phase and then selects the level on which it wishes to remain.[149] It can join with the upper soul, with the lower soul, or remain a separate power and fluctuate between the two. The choice of the mid-soul also affects the lower soul If it is attracted upward, the entire soul is raised to the intelligible world; but if it is drawn downward, it is isolated from the upper part and the world of Nous. The upper part, the purely intellectual, can never be drawn down to the lower level. It remains always in the intelligible universe of which it is a part.[150] Thus, it is not embodiment, as such, that is for Plotinus a sin and a degradation of the soul, but the soul's deep descent or penetration into an earthly or animal body, i.e., soul existing on its lowest level. It is the attitude of the soul, its choice in the type of life it wishes to live, that makes the difference.

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[147] II. 9:2.

[148] *Ibid*.

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[149] ἢ αὐτοὶ μὲν οἱ λογιζόμενοι καὶ νοοῦμεν τὰ ἐν τῇ διανοῖα νοήματα αὐτοί· τοῦτο γαρ ἡμεῖς· τὰ δὲ τοῦ νοῦ ἐνεργήματα ἄνωθεν οὕτως, ὡς τὰ ἐκ τῆς αἰσθήσεως κάτωθεν, τοῦτο ὄντες τὸ κύριον τῆς φυχῆς, μέσον δυνάμεως διττῆς, χείρονος καὶ βελτίονος, χείρονος μὲν τῆς αἰσθήσεως, βελτίονος δὲ τοῦ νοῦ V. 3:3.

[150] II. 9:2.

When Plotinus speaks of a soul's descent into body, it should not be understood as a literal descent. There is no spatial movement of the soul from one place to another.[151] Plotinus claims that a soul never enters or unites with a body, but unspatially envelops and permeates it, always remaining a separate entity.[152] The relationship of the soul to the body is considered by Plotinus as an operative force to its instrument, a notion also found in the thought of Aristotle.[153] Using his most popular analogy of the presence of light in air, Plotinus states that the soul's relationship to body is similar to that of light which penetrates the air completely, but without ever becoming divided or fused with it.[154] Again, this example should not be considered as an exact explantion of what actually takes place between body and soul. Like all his other spatial descriptions of the soul's entry into the body, it is a metaphorical illustration used by Plotinus to aid the mind in better understanding certain abstract facts.[155] If soul is indivisible, omnipresent to the body and not confined within its boundaries, why then do we speak of the soul as being in body? Plotinus claims that it is because the body is visible and the soul is not. If the soul were visible, we would speak of the body's being in the soul.[156] The question of how the soul associates with the body is of great interest and importance to Plotinus and one to which he gives considerable attention. An indication of his interest in the subject can be seen from Porphyry's statement in Life. In chapter 13, he states that Plotinus spent three days discussing with Porphyry the soul's connection with the body. At a point in the discussion, a certain Thaumasius joined the group. After listening to the questions and answers for a while, he commented that he would prefer to hear a general treatise on the subject by Plotinus rather than a series of questions and answers. Plotinus replied that without questions and answers, there would be no material for the type of treatise that Thaumasius desired. It appears that Plotinus did not consider any question or discussion concerning the soul's association with the body minor or unimportant, or not worthy of discussion. He apparently believed that only by the method of question and discussion--by consideration of every question posed, by exploring various possible answers to each question, and by careful pursual of each alternative to its conclusion--could a topic of any importance be properly treated.

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[151] VI. 4:16.

[152] I. 1:18.

[153] I. 1:3; IV. 3:21.

[154] IV. 3:20, 22.

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[155] IV. 3:9.

[156] εἰ δὲ γε ὁρατὸν ἡ ψυχή....οὐϰ ἂν ἔφαμεν τὴν ψυχὴν ἐν τῷ σώματι εἶναι, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ ϰυριωτέρω τὸ μὴ τοιοῦτον ϰαὶ ἐν τῷ συνέχοντι τὸ συνεχόμενον ϰαὶ ἐν τῷ μὴ ῥέοντι τὸ ῥέον IV. 3:20.

Chapter III

THE BODY-SOUL COMPLEX--MAN

The individual human soul, according to Plotinus, is amphibious (ἀμφίβιος),it lives its life in both spheres, the intelligible and the sensible. In its intuitive or intellectual phase it resides in the intelligible universe, completely transcendent and never coming into contact with the material universe. In its lowest phase, the irrational or vegetative, which is a mere shadow (εἴδωλον) of the intuitive phase, it lives in the world of sense.[157] Using the mythical language of Homer's Odyssey,[158] Plotinus compares the amphibious existence of the soul to the myth of the demigod Hercules, whose shade or shadow lingers in Hades while he himself dwells among the gods in heaven.[159] It is the conjoint (συναμφότερον) of the vegetative phase and the body, together with the discursive phase, which constitutes what is commonly known as the being "man". Adopting the Platonic definition, Plotinus defines man as a soul using a body.[160] How does the soul associate with the body? Plotinus struggles with this problem throughout his work. Most of the discussion of the soul-body association is found in Ennead IV, in which Plotinus attempts to find an adequate explanation. The difficulty in answering this problem is that body and soul are both ultimately derived from the same source, the One, each representing a different level in the chain of realities, the soul a higher level than body; however, they are of a completely different nature. Body is corporeal and perishable, whereas soul is the life-giving and structuring force of the bodily constituents, and is therefore non-corporeal and remains always imperishable. Only a non-corporeal principle could perform the functions which belong to the soul.[161] In his attempt to answer the problem of the soul-body, Plotinus strongly stresses the non-corporeality and immortality of the soul. He argues against the Stoic doctrine that the soul is a special type of body, a fiery material breath (πνεῦμα), which exists in a certain state (πως ἔχον). He also argues against the Epicurean view that the soul is the product of a group of lifeless atoms or partless entities.[162] Against these materialistic theories, Plotinus states that as the animating force and the agent which brings order and structure to the body, the soul must be completely and indivisibly present to each and every part of the body. This characteristic action can only be attributed to an immaterial entity. Furthermore, he claims that it is impossible for a bodily substance to possess the unity and self-identity necessary in the processes of sense-perception and mental activity. Intellectual knowledge occurs only when the soul's attention is disengaged from bodily conditions. Thus, the soul must be a non-corporeal being. A further consideration: since the object of intellectual knowledge is non-corporeal, the subject which apprehends must also be non-corporeal. Plotinus asks how an object of magnitude can know something that has no magnitude, such as abstract concepts.

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[157] IV. 8:4.

[158] 11:601-2.

[159] I. 1:12; IV. 3:27.

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[160] φυχὴ...χρωμένη σώματι I. 1:3.

[161] IV. 7:3.

[162] Plotinus' arguments of the non-corporeality of the soul are found in IV. 7:2-8.

According to Plotinus, because the soul is non-corporeal, it is immortal, or eternal, since his doctrine of the soul's immortality includes more than just the view that the soul survives the death of the body. In one of his most famous treatises, which he devotes to the question of the soul's immortality,[163] Plotinus states that the soul, as an immaterial entity, is of a divine and eternal nature.[164] He claims that this fact is quite apparent if one views the soul in its natural pristine state, completely separated from all sensible things. If one acknowledges the fact that the soul in its pure state can behold and contemplate the eternal realities, one cannot possibly doubt that the soul is divine and, therefore, immortal. Plotinus continues his arguments on the eternality of the soul by stating three well-known Platonic views, that the soul possesses life and being within itself and, therefore, cannot be destroyed, that the soul's knowledge of the eternal Forms through reminiscence indicates that it existed before the body and must be eternal, and that the soul as a single and simple active being in living is not susceptible to being destroyed.[165] Furthermore, Plotinus claims that if the individual soul were dissoluble, the universe would have long ceased to exist.[166]

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[163] IV. 7.

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[164] τῇ θειοτέρα φύσει συγγενὴς ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τῇ αἰδίῳ. IV. 7:15.

[165] IV. 7:11-12, 17.

[166] IV. 7:12.

However, although Plotinus stresses the incorporeality of the soul and its separateness from the body, the soul maintains a continual relationship with the body. The idea of the soul's continuing relationship to body is not clearly defined in Plotinus. He appears to accept the view that the human soul, the part of the soul which comes into contact with the earthly body, although it must leave the body, can never exist without some bodily relationship.[167] The body with which the soul is continually associated is of a celestial or ethereal nature, and it is clothed with this body when it first descends from the intelligible universe.[168] Plotinus refers to this celestial body as "pneuma",[169] and describes it as diaphanous and luminous.[170] It contains within it the vegetative principle,[171] and it is by means of the celestial body that the soul descends into a more earthly body.[172] It appears that the celestial body or "pneuma" is the shadow (εἴδωλον) that joins with the body to form what Plotinus calls the "συναμφότερον"; and it is the "pneuma" which serves as the connecting link between the pure, incorporeal soul and the earthly body.

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[167] καίτοι τινές φασι τόδε μὲν [σῶμα] καταλείψειν [τὴν ἡμετέραν ψυχήν], οὐ πάντη δὲ ἔξω σώματος ἔσεσθαι IV. 3:4.

[168] IV. 3:15. The belief in the celestial or ethereal body enveloping the soul was popular among the Platonists of the time. A summary of the origin and development of the theory is found in E. R. Dodds' edition of *Proclus, The Elements of Theology* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1963), Appendix II.

[169] παρ' ἡμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν II. 2:2.

[170] διαφανὲς καὶ ἐλλαμπόμενον IV. 4:26.

[171] IV. 4:26.

Although it is not clearly stated in Plotinus, it seems that the soul's "pnuema" survives the death of the earthly body and reascends with the soul to the heavenly regions. It remains there until the proper time when it enters a new earthly body, in accordance with the type of life it chose to live during its previous existence on earth.[173] According to Plotinus, it is only the completely purified soul, one that has arrived at the level of Nous, that can discard the ethereal body in the heavenly regions and reascend to the world of intelligible reality.[174] The concept of the celestial body or "pneuma" appears to be of little philosophical importance or interest to Plotinus. He employs it primarily as a means of explaining the pure soul's connection and association with the earthly body, an issue which was of major importance in his thought.[175]

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[172] IV. 3:9, 15.

[173] IV. 3:9, 10; III. 6:5.

[174] IV. 3:24; III. 6:5.

In his treatise on the immortality of the soul, Plotinus critically examines two theories that attempt to explain the soul's association with the body; the theory of harmony (ἁρμονία) or "attunement", as Rich[176] translates it, which is discussed in the Phaedo (85ff) and which Plotinus attributes to the Pythagoreans,[177] and Aristotle's doctrine of the soul as the entelechy (ἐντελέχεια) of the body.[178] The attunement theory compares the soul to the harmony or accord that is produced on the strings of a lyre when the instrument is tuned. Alluding to the Phaedo, Plotinus states that the theory of attunement has already been proved untenable. Nonetheless, he continues to present six of his own arguments based, according to Rich's research, on Aristotle's Eudemus and the De Anima.[179] Plotinus' first argument is that the soul existed before the body, whereas according to the model of attunement, the body would have to exist before the soul, as the lyre is prior to its attunement. Secondly, soul rules, guides and often resists the body; as an attunement of body it could not do these things. It would depend on the structure of the body. Thirdly, soul is a real being, an attunement is not. His fourth argument is that a compounding of the material elements which constitute our frame would produce merely health not soul. Fifth, according to this theory there would be more than one soul in each individual, for each part of the body, blended in varying proportions, would require a separate soul. Sixth, and most important of all, the attunement theory requires that prior to the soul that "occurs" to the body when attunement takes place, there would have to be another soul to bring about this condition. Just as in the case of a musical instrument, a musician is required to tune the strings; neither musical strings nor human bodies are able to put themselves in tune. To summarize briefly, the attunement theory treats the animate and orderly as inanimate and disorderly. It concludes that order (τάξις) is not due to the soul, but that soul itself owes its substantial existence to order--which is self-produced. This is quite obviously impossible; thus, the soul cannot be connected to the body as an attunement to its instrument.

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[175] Life, chapter 13; IV. 3:9.

[176] A. N. M. Rich, "Body and Soul in the Philosophy of Plotinus," Journal of the History of Philosophy, I. (1963), 4.

[177] IV. 7:12.

[178] IV. 7:13.

[179] Rich, "Body and Soul," p. 4.

With regard to Aristotle's doctrine of entelechy, Plotinus claims that this too does not correctly describe the soul's association with the body. For example, as the advocates of this theory believe, the soul is connected to the body as the shape of a statue is connected to the bronze from which it is worked. It follows that when the body is divided, the soul also, as its form (εἶδος), will be divided with it; so that if any part of the body is cut away, a fragment of the soul must also be severed. Also, since it is necessary that an entelechy be inseparable from the being which it fulfills or brings to realization, it is then impossible for the soul to withdraw from the body in sleep; in fact, sleep itself is not possible. Further, if the soul is an entelechy, the resistence of reason to the bodily desires would be completely ruled out. The total organism, body and entelechy soul, must have one uniform experience throughout, and there can be no conflict between them. Moreover, according to the theory of entelechy, only sense-perception would be possible, the act of intellection (νόηση), which does not involve the body in any way, would be impossible. It is for this reason, states Plotinus, that the followers of this doctrine, the Peripatetics, posit another soul, the intellect. This intellect they place above the entelechy soul and consider it immortal. It is this superior soul which performs the purely intellectual functions. Finally, the same soul passes from one living creature to another. Plotinus asks how the soul of the former can become the soul of the latter if it is the entelechy of one particular being. Thus, he claims, the soul is not an inseparable entelechy. Its existence does not depend upon its serving as a form to anything, but it is an individual essence that exists as a pure and simple entity before it becomes the soul of some particular living being.

Plotinus firmly believes that the soul, until liberated by contemplation and the practice of philosophy, is in some way connected to and interacts with the body. What is the manner of their connection and interaction? Plotinus attempts to explain it by comparing the relationship of soul and body to the pilot and his vessel.[180] He finds, however, that this analogy is unsatisfactory; it only indicates that the soul is potentially separable from the body as the pilot is from his vessel. It does not clarify the soul's mode of presence. Soul is omnipresent to the body, penetrating it at every point. This is not the case with the pilot and his vessel. Plotinus then attempts to compare soul and body to the pilot and his skill at the helm, with which he controls and directs the vessel. However, even this analogy is not adequate; the pilot's skill is external to the instrument through which he works, whereas the soul is immanent within its instrument--the body. Furthermore, this parallel does not explain the soul's actual mode of presence in the body.

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[180] IV. 3:21.

The best clarification of the soul-body relationship, Plotinus decides, is by comparison with that of light and air.[181] Light is present to air completely, yet is never mixed with it at any point. Air flows in and out of light, but light remains constant. When the air passes beyond the illuminated area, it in no way diminishes the light. It is air that is in light and not vice versa. In the same way, soul is not mixed with body

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[181] IV. 3:22.

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nor divided by contact with it. It is soul that contains the body, not the body soul. Also, like light that can penetrate the air and yet remain unaffected by it, soul can totally penetrate the body and still not be subject to its affections.[182] Thus, by comparing soul and body to light and air, Plotinus establishes the concept of the soul as indivisible, omnipresent, not confined within the limits of the body, and able to remain independent and unaffected by the conditions and experiences of the body.

However, Plotinus admits that there exists between soul and body a communion, a certain accidental sympathy.[183] This communion exists only between the two lower phases of the soul and body, for the highest phase of soul remains always transcendent of body. Adopting a comparison from Aristotle,[184] Plotinus states that the sympathy between soul and body may be compared to a form that is immanent and inseparable from its material, like the shape of the ax imposed on the iron. In this case, it is the compound of matter and form, the συναμφότερον , the iron shaped in the form of the ax, which performs the various functions. In other words, the effectiveness of the iron is due to the fact that it has been formed in the shape of an ax. Thus, if one applies this comparison to the relationship between soul and body, one would conclude that soul associates or combines with body. This association produces an entity of two distinct natures, not joined but in contact with each other, i.e., an animate physical frame, body, warmed and lit throughout by soul. It is this composite of soul and body, the ζῶον or συναμφότερον, that is the source of the various sensations, desires and feelings; and it is in this respect that we can say that soul and body are in sympathy with each other.[185] Soul in isolation is impassable and body by itself is devoid of all life.

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[182] I. 1:4.

[183] διὸ καὶ τὸ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς οὕτω λέγειν συμπαραθεῖν τῷ σώματι καὶ τὴν φυχὴν οὐκ ἄτοπον ἴσως VI. 4:3.

[184] _De Anima_ II. 1. 412b. 12.

Plotinus takes great care to explain the various ways in which soul and body come into contact and interact within the living organism. He is especially concerned with the faculties of sense-perception, which are closely connected with the discursive reasoning. According to him, the various parts of the animated body participate in the soul's powers in a manner peculiar to themselves. Each bodily sense organ is fitted for a certain function, through which a particular power of the soul operates: the power of sight in the eyes, of hearing in the ears, of taste in the tongue, of smell in the nostrils. The power of feeling has no specific organ; the entire body is its instrument.[186] This does not mean that the soul, in its contact with the body, becomes divided into separate parts. The soul, in its relationship to the body, is "all in all and all in every part."[187] Thus, the soul can be described both as divisible and indivisible. It is in a sense divisible because it is present in every single part of the divisible body, but it is indivisible because it is present in its entirety in the whole body and in each of its parts.[188] All of the soul's faculties are inseparably connected by its discursive phase. Each sense organ interprets the material it receives in its own fashion. The data are then transmitted to the discursive reason, where they are judged and classified.[189]

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[185] I. 1:4; VI. 4:14-15.

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[186] IV. 3:23.

[187] [ψυχὴ] ὅλη ἐν πᾶσι καὶ ἐν ὁτῳοῦν αὐτοῦ [σῶμα]
ὅλη IV. 2:1.

[188] *Ibid*.

[189] IV. 3:3.

Therefore, it is through the faculties of sense-perception that the discursive phase of the soul comes into contact with the body. Since the faculties of sense-perception originate in the brain, the ancients, observes Plotinus, thought that the discursive phase of the soul is lodged in the head locally. Although Plotinus agrees that the brain is the center for the various organs that are in communion with reason, he does not believe that the discursive phase of the soul is actually located anywhere in the body.[190]

Pain and pleasure are also affections of the body-soul complex, and are the direct result of the soul's association with the body. He claims that soul and body are two entities of a completely different level and nature. When these two contrasting natures attempt to associate together, a precarious and unstable alliance is formed, which gives rise to difficulties.[191] Whenever the body is deprived of the soul's image which it possesses--when the body-soul balance is disturbed, causing a decrease in the body's energy or vitality--pain is produced at the precise point that is affected. Inversely, pleasure is felt when soul and body have once again been restored to a balanced working relationship. The painful experience begins in the body, but it is preceived by the reasoning faculty which localizes the pain. The soul never experiences the pain directly, is never affected by it, but perceives and is aware of it, because of its proximity to the body. Plotinus believes that this can be shown to be true by the fact that soul is present as a whole in every part of the body. If it were itself affected by the sensation, it would be unable to localize the pain, but would feel it in every point throughout the entire body. Perception of pain, which is what the soul experiences, is not the same as the actual sensation, but only a kind of knowledge of the suffering. Therefore, the discursive phase of the soul that acquires this knowkedge is unaffected by it, or it could not accurately know or convey the message; just as a messenger, who is affected and overwhelmed by an event, is either unable to report his message or unable to report it precisely.[192]

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[190] IV. 3:23.

[191] IV. 4:18.

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[192] IV. 4:19.

As with bodily pain and pleasure, the corporeal desires belong to the living organism, the body animated by soul. According to Plotinus, neither an undetermined body nor a pure soul is able to be the subject of desire. Desire begins in the body as a vague, unconscious need. This need is then transferred to the vegetative phase of the soul, where it is realized as a fully conscious desire. An image of this desire is then transmitted by means of sensation to the reasoning faculty. On the basis of this image, the reasoning phase, without paying any attention either to the body or to the lower phase of the soul which manifested the desire, determines whether the desire should be satisfied or resisted.[193]

The extent to which an individual shares in the conflicts and affections of the body is determined by the level on which the individual has selected to live. Man's soul, as previously mentioned, is tripartite; one part directed to the contemplation of the intelligible world, one concerned with body and one intermediate.[194] What Plotinus means by this statement is that there are three

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[193] IV. 4:20, 21.

[194] II. 9:2.

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levels on which a man may choose to live. His choice determines his mode of living and his rank in the scale of being. An individual who elects to live on the level of Nous is beyond the reach of the bodily passions and feelings. This does not mean that his body cannot suffer or feel emotion, but that he is spiritually detached from the cares and conflicts of the body and the material universe. Life on this level can be attained through the pursuit and mastery of the cardinal virtues--courage (ἀνδρεία), wisdom (φρόνησις), self-control (σωφροσύνη) and justice (δικαιοσύνη)--the most important of which is wisdom. By living consistently on this level, man can eventually attain union with the One.[195] The individual who lives in accordance with his reasoning faculty, and who therefore lives the life of a good and intelligent man, is aware of the various experiences and affections of the body and attempts to keep them in balance. Such a person is aware of the virtues that lead to Nous and finally to the One, but has not been able to master them.[196] Lastly, man who lives purely by his senses, devoting himself selfishly to the care of the body, becomes a prisoner of them. He is burdened by the body's needs and continually troubled by its turmoil and sufferings. On this level of existence, man is separated from Nous and the intelligible world; he has morally turned from Nous to an inferior level of existence. As has already been noted, separation from the world of Nous is, for Plotinus, the gravest sin of man--the basis of all evil and unhappiness. It is expiated by the soul's being punished by chastising spirits (δαίμονες) and being reincarnated in animal or plant form, whichever is best suited to its nature.[197]

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[195] I. 2:3-7; IV. 8:2.

[196] I. 2:7; II. 1:5; IV. 8:8; V. 3:3.

Plotinus' views of the nature and destiny of the soul reflect, to a certain degree, Orphic-Neopythagorean teachings about the soul. According to these teachings, the soul is eternal and divine--each soul is a spark of the divine essence that irradiates the universe. The soul descends and is imprisoned in an earthly body, as punishment for an error that it committed while in its divine state. For thousands of years, the soul is doomed to periods of punishment in Hades. It alternates with incarnations in a variety of human, animal or plant bodies, depending on its moral conduct during its earthly

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[197] IV. 3:17, 6:3, 8:4-5; VI. 4:16.

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existence. The soul, however, while in the earthly body, is capable of freeing itself from "the grievous cycle of births and deaths" and returning to its divine state. It can accomplish this through discipline and purification (καθαρμοί). This consists of the pursuit of virtue, abstinence from animal flesh and wine, celibacy, taking no oaths and not participating in any animal offerings. Orphism also included a system of sacraments (ὄργια), in which participation was essential if the soul were to regain its divine state. The Neopythagoreans, on the other hand, were inclined to minimize participation in popular worship and considered the pursuit of philosophy and the spiritual contemplation of the Divine as better means of reaching the god-like state. Thus, man, according to these teachings, is free to determine his own fate. He can, by purifying his soul, attain divinity, or he can sink to the lowest level in the scale of existence by living purely by his senses and not reflecting.[198]

Plotinus attempts to deal seriously with the Orphic-Neopythagorean concept that man is the free and responsible cause of his fate. He rejects the Stoic belief in

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[198] E. Zeller, Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy, trans. L. R. Palmer, Meridian Books (New York: Noonday Press, 1955) pp. 25-35; 300-305.

"εἰμαρμένη", the idea that a single principle constitutes all causes and effects, because it deprives human behavior of freedom and individuality. He maintains that it is necessary to suppose that individuals always retain their identity, and that a person's good and evil deeds stem from himself and no one's evil conduct may be attributed to the All.[199] For this reason, it cannot be said that the course of the stars is responsible for such essentially human acts of will, emotions, vices and desires. The stars, the weather, the world, all have an effect on us, but the individual personality cannot be destroyed.[200]

However, the concept of the soul as a completely independent agent capable of choosing between good and evil is implied but never completely developed by Plotinus. Therefore, the idea of the soul's freedom remains vague and inconsistent. According to Plotinus, while the soul is concerned with the body and the material universe, it is not in absolute control of itself or free. It is subject to the forces that control the body and the universe. Its actions, both good and evil, are subject to the desires and passions of the body, to the fate determined by its conduct during previous incarnations and to the necessary and uncontrollable forces (τύχαι) that direct the visible universe.[201] A man performs a brave deed because it is an exingency of war; justice and order are established because a wrong exists. A doctor would not be able to perform his skill if there were no patients. However, if he were truly a good doctor, he would prefer that there be no one in need of his help.[202] This does not mean that man's virtuous acts are completely determined, automatically produced, without any human reasoning. Man has some choice whether or not to perform an act of virtue. The soldier does not automatically perform a brave deed, neither does an individual correct an injustice nor a doctor heal without conscious thought.

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[199] III. 1:4.

[200] III. 1:5, 6.

Since these virtuous acts are responses to external causes and events, Plotinus does not regard them as truly autonomous and entirely free. Free actions are rational actions. They originate and are governed by pure reason, and are not motivated or directed by any external causes.[203] Plotinus expresses the same view in his examination of the individual's evil acts. Adhering to the Socratic-Platonic tenet, he states that evil is committed involuntarily. No individual commits an error knowingly or voluntarily; nevertheless, the individual is held responsible for it.[204] What Plotinus means is that man selects the things that lead to sin, but he does so through ignorance. His lower nature is in control and he acts in accordance with it, instead of reason. As Rist[205] points out, man has permitted his lower nature to delude him into thinking that the evil ways that he has chosen will bring him happiness. The concept of freedom expressed by Plotinus is an elaboration and culmination of the views found in Middle Platonism. In the views of the second century Platonists, primarily those of Numenius,[206] Albinus[207] and Pseudo-Plutarch,[208] who presents a view similar to Albinus', are found the rudiments of Plotinus' concept.[209]

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[201] III. 1:8, 2:13; IV. 8:2, 3.

[202] VI. 8:2, 5.

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[203] III. 1:9; VI. 8:4, 7.

[204] III. 2:7, 10; IV. 8:5.

[205] J. M. Rist, Plotinus: The Road to Reality (Cambridge: The University Press, 1967), p. 135.

[206] Fr. 20; T. 30, 45. See above, p. 13ff.

[207] Did. 26:35. See above, p. 22ff.

[208] Moralia 568D-570B.

Plotinus believes that every man possesses a spark of the divine, the intuitive phase of the soul. This enables him, if he wishes, to escape his fate, his evil acts and the necessities of nature, by returning to his higher and true self.[210] This can be accomplished by stripping himself of all earthly trappings (ἄφελε πάντα),[211] and living in accordance with his reason.[212] On this level, man is unaffected by any external forces operating in the physical world, but is in complete control of himself and free.[213] His actions are governed by pure and impassible reason, and pure reason always chooses virtue.[214] An individual who is concerned with the things of the material universe is also subject to the forces and events existing in the cosmos. His actions are not completely his own, but are controlled to a great extent by the existing external causes. The nearest an individual can attain complete freedom of choice is when he exists in the world of Nous. This freedom, however, consists not in having the power to choose between good and evil, but in being able to choose only virtue,[215] in being free from the necessity of choice which the sense world imposes.

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[209] A brief summary of the Middle-Platonic views of freedom is presented in B. Darrell Jackson, "Sources of Origen's Doctrine of Freedom," Church History, 35 (1966), pp. 17-18.

[210] I. 8:7.

[211] V. 3:17.

[212] V. 3:17; I. 1:12, 6:7.

[213] ἄνευ μὲν οὖν σώματος οὖσα κυριωτάτη τε αὑτῆς καὶ ἐλευθέρα καὶ κοσμικῆς αἰτίας ἔξω III. 1:8.

[214] III. 1:9, 10; VI. 8:3, 4.

Man's goal, therefore, should be to return to his higher self and the world of Nous. In this way, he can free himself from "the cycle of births and deaths". The individual soul that has failed to purify itself from the body becomes, after the death of the body, the faculty that it developed the most in its previous life on earth,[216] i.e., the life that the middle part of the soul chose to live. The intuitive phase of the soul always remains in the world of Nous and is not affected by incarnations.

Plotinus' doctrine of reincarnation is set forth, principally, in the second and fourth treatises of Ennead III. It is basically a restatement of Plato's theory. Adopting Plato's humorous tone and vocabulary, Plotinus states that the souls that have lived purely by the senses are born again as animals. If they not only lived by the senses but also possessed a volatile temperament, they become wild beasts; while those that were greedy and over-indulgent become lascivious animals. The dull and unreflective souls are condemned to live the life of a plant. Individuals, who in their earthly existence had been too concerned with music but otherwise lived a good life, become singing birds. Tyrant kings, who had no other vice, become eagles; while the boastful, idle dreamers turn into birds that always soar on high. A man who lived according to his reason and practiced the cardinal virtues, returns again as a man. If however, he had not been very successful in his pursuit of these virtues, he is reborn as a community creature, a bee or something similar.[217] Elsewhere, Plotinus states that some unpurified souls are chastised in Hades by their demons, while other souls return as human beings in order to receive their retribution in kind. For example, cruel masters become slaves; men who had squandered their wealth become paupers; and a murderer returns to be murdered.[218] There appears to be an inconsistency between this statement and the preceding statements on reincarnation. The inconsistency, however, does not originate with Plotinus, but with Plato[219] whose views Plotinus has adopted. A soul, whose purification has not been completed, ascends to the heavenly regions and remains there, becoming the soul of a star or other heavenly being.[220] The soul that has completely emancipated itself from the body ascends and dwells in the spiritual world, in the place of true being and reality and the divine. Such a soul will dwell with the divine and in God.[221]

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[215] Ibid.

[216] ἐξελθοῦσα δέ, ὅ τι περ ἐπλεόνασε, τοῦτο γίνεται. III. 4:2; also III. 4:6.

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[217] III. 4:2.

There is a difference of opinion among scholars, regarding the significance of the doctrine of reincarnation in the thought of Plotinus. Armstrong[222] and Rich[223] believe that, although Plotinus adopts Plato's lighthearted manner when discussing the reincarnation of souls, he certainly understands the statements in a literal and serious sense. Inge[224] and Pistorius,[225] on the other hand, deny that Plotinus accepts or is really interested in the doctrine. They contend that he refers to it in the Enneads, either because it was a popular belief or because it is mentioned by Plato. In her article, Rich conclusively demonstrates that their denials are unjustified. The most important references to the doctrine found in the Enneads, which clearly indicate the significance that Plotinus attached to the doctrine of reincarnation, are IV. 7:13, 19; VI. 7:6 and VI. 4:16.[226] In IV. 7:13, where Plotinus is critically examining Aristotle's theory of entelechy, he employs the doctrine of reincarnation to refute the theory. He asks how an entelechy soul can pass into another body. He concludes that a soul, in order to transmigrate into another body, must be a simple, independent entity. Plotinus does not only believe in the reincarnation of the soul into a human body, but also in its transmigration into the body of an animal. This can be demonstrated by his remarks in VI. 7:6 and IV. 7:19. In VI. 7:6, Plotinus goes to great lengths to explain how it is possible for a human soul to transmigrate into the body of an animal. This can happen when an individual soul has deliberately chosen an animal nature, i.e., has developed only its animal faculties. In IV. 7:19, Plotinus makes a special point of remarking that even the souls that have erred to such a degree that they have entered the bodies of animals are still immortal. Both of these statements would be superfluous, unless Plotinus understood transmigration in a literal sense. Finally, in VI. 4:16, Plotinus himself testifies to his belief in this doctrine. He says that the ancient philosophical theory of the soul's periodic descents and returns, its punishments and banishments into animal bodies, is in agreement with his own that the soul basically is not capable of evil.

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[218] III. 2:13, 4:6; IV. 8:5.

[219] _Phaedrus_ 249a-b; _Laws_ X. 904a-905b.

[220] III. 4:6.

[221] IV. 3:24.

[222] A. H. Armstrong, "Plotinus," _The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy_ (Cambridge: The University Press, 1967), p. 256.

[223] A. N. M. Rich, "Reincarnation in Plotinus," _Mnemosyne_ s. 4, 10 (1957), p. 232-238.

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[224] W. R. Inge, The Philosophy of Plotinus, Vol. II (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), p. 33.

[225] P. V. Pistorius, Plotinus and Neoplatonism (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1952), p. 99.

[226] Rich, "Reincarnation." Miss Rich points out other passages that might be interpreted as indicating Plotinus' interest in reincarnation, and she also presents several convincing arguments against the opinion of Inge and Pistorius. I have attempted to summarize from Miss Rich's article only those statements that I considered the most significant.

These statements clearly indicate that Plotinus accepted the doctrine of transmigration. His reason for accepting it seems to be that it provides proof for the individuality and immortality of the soul, and a continuing opportunity for the soul to purify itself, to rid itself of all earthly trappings, and thus rise to a higher state, which is Plotinus' principal aim and concern throughout his philosophy.

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Chapter IV

THE SOUL'S RETURN TO THE ONE

According to Plotinus, man is an alien in the world of sense. His true home is his place of origin, the intelligible universe, and he should make every effort to return to it.[227] The journey back (πορεία), however, is strenuous and the goal difficult to attain; it is a long process of purification involving great intellectual and moral training. In the philosophy of Plotinus, there are no short cuts or external aids to help man in his journey to the One. The sacraments and public worship, so popular in most religions as aids to concentration and ascent to the Divine, hold no major significance for him. This does not mean that Plotinus is entirely critical of popular worship. He accepts the idea that the universe contains beings, both visible and invisible, who are of a higher order than man; and strongly condemns those who deny their divinity and refuse them the reverence they are due.[228] His primary reason for being indifferent to the popular method of attaining the mystical union is that, according to his views of man's nature, they are superfluous and serve no purpose. Plotinus believes that man possesses within himself the power--the divine spark--to reach the highest realm; and he can do so by putting forth the necessary effort.[229] Therefore, his system has no need for any providential saving grace of the sort which aids a man's soul, through the mediation of prayers, rites or sacraments.

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[227] I. 6:8.

[228] II. 1:5, 9:9; V. 8:9.

As previously indicated, Plotinus believes that man's higher soul, his intuitive or rational phase, never comes into contact with the sensible world. Emanating from Nous, it remains in the intelligible world, in constant and direct contemplation of the intelligible realities.[230] It never enters into nor becomes concerned with the world of sense. Thus, the rational or intuitive phase of the soul remains eternally constant, pure and impassible, untouched and unaffected by the sins, passions and suffering, which are a part of the world of sense.[231]

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[229] VI. 9:4, 8.

[230] II. 9:2.

[231] IV. 8:8; V. 1:10; VI. 4:14.

In continuous and immediate communion with the One, the soul receives from the One, through its spontaneous and undiminished outpouring of its power or energy, the continuous illumination, the power and the movement or desire to return to its source.[232] According to Plotinus, the soul's love for the supreme One, and its desire to return to its source, is given to the soul by the One, who lifts the soul and turns it towards the Good.[233] As Armstrong[234] points out, the remark that best expresses this aspect of Plotinus' thought is the statement that the soul loves the supreme Good, because from its very beginnings it has been moved or stirred by the Good to love.[235] Therefore, man possesses all that is required for his salvation. His pure rational soul continually and uninterruptedly receives from the Good the illumination or power required for its redemption. Man needs only to recognize or realize this power within him and to willingly and conscientiously utilize it to pursue the necessary moral and intellectual discipline involved in reaching the highest realm. According to Plotinus, if man wishes to attain salvation and if he is prepared to make the necessary effort, he can, without any additional or special divine grace, attain the vision of the One. The power to return to the One is always and continually present to each and every man; man has only to utilize this power. This view of man's nature, and his means of attaining salvation, is one of the principal differences between the thought of Plotinus and that of other religious writers, either pagan or Christian.[236]

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[232] V. 6:5; VI. 7:22, 31, 35.

[233] VI. 7:22, 31.

[234] A. H. Armstrong, "Salvation, Plotinian and Christian," Downside Review, 75 (1957), p. 128.

[235] φυχὴ ἐρᾶ μὲν ἐκείνου, ὑπ'αὐτοῦ ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἰς τὸ ἐρᾶν κινηθεῖσα VI. 7:31.

Because of the divine element within them, all men are capable of reaching the highest level. However, few men are aware of this power, and still fewer are willing to undergo the very vigorous intellectual and moral discipline necessary to bring the divine element to perfection.[237] Of the individuals who attempt to reach the intelligible universe, there are three types who, because of their training and self-discipline, are most likely to rise to the level of Nous. The types of individuals are the philosopher (φιλόσοφος), the musician or music-lover (μουσικός), and the lover (ἐρωτικός), which, in the Plotinian sense, implies an individual who enjoys and appreciates beauty as it is exemplified in forms and shapes.[238] Attempting once again to fit the various phases of the soul into his structure of metaphysics, Plotinus states that according to the scheme of things, not all souls can exist on the level of Nous, and certainly not at the same time. The universe, in order to be complete, must include many different kinds of souls of varying degrees of goodness and evil.[239] To further explain his point, Plotinus compares the universe to a drama; which includes among its characters not only heroes, but also characters such as a servant and a peasant who speak in a vulgar way. To eliminate these minor characters from the play would spoil the beauty of the whole, for they help to make the play complete.[240]

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[236] The Christian view of man and his means of salvation, as presented by Plotinus' contemporary Origen, is discussed in Chapter VII. A detailed discussion of the Plotinian and Christian doctrines of grace and salvation are presented in J. Trouillard's, La Purification Plotinienne and La Procession Plotinienne (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955).

[237] I. 6:8; IV. 3:6; V. 1:1.

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[238] I. 3:1-3.

[239] IV. 8:3, 3:6; III. 2:5.

The first step in the ascent back to the world of Intellect is the love and appreciation of the beauty existing in every aspect of the visible universe. The appreciation of the beauty in the sensible world awakens in the soul a passionate desire or eros for the true beauty, the beauty of the supersensible world, and for the ultimate beauty which is the One.[241] Under the influence of eros, or the desire for the One, the soul undertakes a series of purifying processes which prepare for the final union. The first step is the practice and mastery of the cardinal virtues--wisdom, courage, self-control and justice. Mastery of the virtues results in man's stripping himself of everything alien, his lower nature and all external impurities, and returning to his true and higher self.[242] When man has accomplished this successfully, he has entered the realm of the World Soul. On this level man no longer exercises his lower faculties. Sense-perception and faculties such as opinion (δόξα), memory and remembrance (μνήμη - ἀνάμνησις), and reason (διάνοια) are no longer necessary. It is only pure intellect, the intuitive phase of the soul, that functions on this level. This does not mean that man's lower powers or nature cease to exist, but that they are dormant; the individual is not aware of them on this level. Man, in his ordinary daily existence, is so preoccupied with the body and the things of sense that he is unaware of the intuitive phase of his soul, which remains always in the intelligible realm. In the same way, when an individual is living on the intuitive level of the soul, he is unconscious of his lower faculties.[243]

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[240] III. 2:11.

[241] I. 6:2; VI. 7:31.

[242] I. 2:1-4, 6:6; III. 6:5.

After the soul has reached the level of the World Soul, it must prepare itself for the level of the world of Nous. It does so by training itself to learn and understand the intelligible truths. This is accomplished first through the study of mathematics (μαθήματα) and then through training in dialectic (διαλεκτική). Dialectic is, for Plotinus, the last stage in the ascent before the final union.[244] It is the way by which man's mind attains the intuitive, contemplative knowledge of the divine realities, but it is not the end of the journey. It raises an individual to the level of Nous, but not beyond. On this level there is still the distinction between the contemplator and the contemplated. To attain the highest level, union with the One, the soul must rise above thought, to a state of unconsciousness, a state of ecstasy characterized by the absence of all duality.[245] However, this last stage can be reached neither by science nor by pure thought, but by a sudden presence which is superior to all of these.[246] The One cannot be pursued. The individual, when he reaches the level of Nous, must wait quietly and patiently for the vision to appear and prepare himself to contemplate it, as the eye awaits the rising of the sun, which appears in its own good time above the horizon.[247] It must be noted that the term "appears", with reference to the One, should not be interpreted literally. The One does not come to the individual during the mystical union. It is always present in everyone, but during the mystical union it makes its presence felt. The "appearance" of this vision represents the attainment of ultimate purification; it is the final awakening and realization of the soul to its true self.

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[243] I. 6:8; IV. 3:12-13; V. 1:10, 8:11.

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[244] I. 3:1-4.

[245] I. 3:1; VI. 7:34-35, 9:4.

[246] VI. 9:4.

[247] V. 5:8.

Ascent to the One is then, for Plotinus, not the mortification of the flesh and severe self-denial, but a moral process, a discipline of the mind achieved through the pursuance of a simple life. It is a life in which the needs of the body and the concerns of the sense world do not interfere greatly with an individual's mental activities. It is true that Plotinus was somewhat sensitive about himself and never discussed his personal life.[248] However, he never adopts a hostile attitude towards the body, nor advocates that man should detach himself from society and his fellow men. What Plotinus emphasizes is not complete detachment from the world, but that the activities of the lower self should not distract the individual from his contemplation of the

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[248] Life, 1.

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true realities. Regarding the body, he states that man should provide for the needs of the body, and should treat it with care and respect, in the same way that a musician cares for his lyre.[249] However, man's care and concern for the body should be conducted in a disciplined and detached manner. According to Porphyry,[250] Plotinus was able to live successfully on the level of Nous, while still involved in the world of sense. He was a teacher, but he also served as a guardian for several children who were placed in his care after the death of their parents. Although he conscientiously fulfilled his social duties and responsibilities, he never permitted them to interfere with his contemplation of the intelligibles. It is reported by Porphyry that during his waking hours, he never for a moment relaxed from his contemplation; and that during the period that Porphyry was associated with him, Plotinus attained union with the One four times.[251]

When the individual soul reaches the level of Nous, it becomes possessed with a more intense passion, a "straining" desire to become united with the One; in a union which, for purposes of clarification, Plotinus compares with the union of earthly lovers.[252] To fulfill this desire, the soul casts away everything, all it has possessed and known, all its attributes and even the Forms and the World of Nous. The soul remains, in its pure and unadulterated form, alone and passive, for only in this way will it be able to receive the Alone--the One.[253] Suddenly and unexpectedly, the vision of the One appears to the purified soul.[254] The mystical experience is difficult to describe. Plotinus, who on several occasions experienced such communion,[255] claims that the experience cannot be described adequately, either in terms of vision or in any terms of any action that is known or percieved. During this experience there is no longer the distinction between subject and object, for the two have become one.[256] The best that can be done is to attempt to explain the mystical union by means of inadequate metaphors. In attaining union with the One, the individual reaches a state in which he is no longer himself; Seer and Seen are one. He is swept away, filled with enthusiasm, tranquil, solitary and unmoved--in a state of perfect rest--free from everything alien. Plotinus compares such an individual to a man who, having penetrated the innermost sanctuaries, leaves the images of the shrine behind him.[257] In this state, the individual is completely fulfilled, all of his potentialities have been fully realized and he is totally at peace with himself. He has turned inward, his pleasures and happiness now come from within, and the things of sense have been relegated to the position of mere accessories. Finally, man has found himself.

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[249] I. 4:16; II. 9:18.

[250] Life, 8-9, 13-14.

[251] Life, 9, 23.

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[252] VI. 7:34, 9:9.

[253] V. 3:17; VI. 7:34.

[254] V. 5:8.

[255] IV. 8:1; Life, 23.

[256] VI. 9:9-11, 7:34-35; V. 3:14.

Union with the One is not, as has sometimes been thought, the absorption or annihilation of the individual personality, but rather its completion or fulfillment. The individual does not become identical with the One.[258]

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[257] VI. 9:11, 7:35.

[258] For a detailed examination of the important passages in the Enneads which describe the mystical union and substantiate this statement cf. J. M. Rist, Plotinus: The Road to Reality (Cambridge: The University Press, 1967), p. 226ff.

As in the instance of earthly lovers, the individual surrenders to the One, he becomes one with it, not identical to it. Another analogy of the soul's union with the One is the relationship of universal Nous with the One. Universal Nous exists always in perfect union with the One, yet it never loses its identity. It remains eternally a separate entity, a unity in multiplicity, fulfilled and realized by the One.[259]

As long as the soul is in the earthly body, union with the One can only be rare and of very brief duration; for the body always interferes with the soul's total contemplation of the One.[260] Permanent union is achieved at death when the soul is completely free from the body. However, although death is to be welcomed by the man who has reached the level of Nous for he can then attain complete and permanent union with the One, it should not be sought before its time. Interpreting Plato's statement in the Theaetetus,[261] Plotinus states that flight does not mean leaving the life on earth, but remaining on earth and living in accordance with wisdom and justice.[262] While in the body, man is not able to retain the vision of the One, but he can return to it by continuously preparing himself for it, by consistently living a virtuous and contemplative life. "This is the life of gods and the god-like and blessed men, a deliverance from the things of the sense world, a life which takes no pleasure in earthly things, a flight of the alone to the Alone."[263]

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[259] VI. 7:35; V. 3:7.

[260] VI. 9:10.

[261] 176-7.

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[262] I. 8:6.

[263] VI. 9:11; also, as has been noted in Chapter I, the fundamental elements of this passage are found in Numenius' fragment 11, but without any mystical connotation.

PART III

ORIGEN'S DOCTRINE OF THE SOUL

XUM

Chapter V

THE SOUL'S CREATION AND FALL

Unlike Plotinus, Origen was not only a student of philosophy, but also a Christian theologian. In fact, he was first and foremost a student and teacher of theology. His intense interest and knowledge of philosophy led him to attempt to construct a system of Christian doctrine, i.e., an attempt to explain his understanding of the Christian beliefs in the philosophical terms of his day. However, Origen's thought cannot be considered a complete, coherent system of formulated doctrines and dogmas as is found in later theological works. Many of his views are essentially of an exploratory nature, they are possible answers or personal opinions about various Christian beliefs that were not answered by dogma or tradition. He submitted these views to the Church to be evaluated and judged. On several important issues, the Church judged his suggestions very critically and rejected them. The fundamental aim of Origen's expository writings is set forth in the preface of the De Principiis. In it he states that the Holy Apostles, in their teachings, set forth only the basic doctrines of the Christian faith, without their making any attempt to investigate or explain the reasons or bases of these doctrines. They left these questions for discussion by future theologians.[264] It was Origen's determination to provide such discussion. From these discussions he also hoped to demonstrate the important function of Christianity, as the new paideia--the educative force--of all mankind. Origen relied on Greek philosophy for the possible solution to many of the questions under discussion. He adopted the popular Greek philosophical ideas which could serve as possible tools to explain the Christian faith. These ideas he reshaped and revised in accordance with his understanding of the Christian beliefs.

Origen's writings are of a diverse and complex nature. For example, his homilies in general reveal a humble and devout Christian, whereas his commentaries, especially the commentaries on St. Matthew and St. John, the *De Principiis* and the *Contra Celsum* indicate a sophisticated student of philosophy, well-versed in the Platonism of his day. The complex nature of his work has perplexed many of the present day interpreters of his works. It has led some of his interpreters to stress the biblical nature of his works and to consider him a biblical scholar and Christian mystic, while others have emphasized the speculative character of his works and classify him as a Neoplatonic philosopher.[265] However, Origen cannot be understood as "either-or". A true picture of him is revealed only when his works are treated as a whole, when his Scriptural exegeses and his speculative theories are treated and interpreted together; when he is considered both a biblical theologian and a philosopher.

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[264] Princ. pref. 3. The works of Origen used in this study are from the edition of C. H. E. Lommatzsch, *Origen Opera Omnia* (25 Vols.; Berlin: Sumtibus Haude et Spener, 1831-48), and P. Koetschau, *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftseller der Ersten Drei Jahrhunderte*, Vol. 2, pts. 1-12: *Origenes Werkes* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1891-1955).

Our knowledge of Origen's thought is not complete. A large portion of his works has been lost. Furthermore, although many of his important treatises survive, they have been preserved not in the Greek text, but in fourth-century Latin translations. Much of the translation is inaccurate, making some parts difficult to interpret.

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[265] The biblical interpretation of Origen is represented by W. Völker, *Das Vollkommenheitsideal des Origenes* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1931) H. de Lubac, *Histoire et Espirit: L'Intelligence de l'Ecriture d'apres Origene* (Paris: Aubier, 1950). The main works treating Origen primarily as a Greek philosopher are E. De Faye, *Origene Sa Vie, Son Oeuvre, Sa Pensee* (3 vols.; Paris: Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, 1923-8) and H. Koch, *Pronoia und Paideusis* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1932).

This is true of several of the commentaries, homilies and expecially of the De Principiis, which contains some of Origen's most speculative theories. Of the Greek fragments of the various homilies and commentaries which have survived, the authenticity of several has been questioned and others have been proven to be only summaries of the original material. Therefore, it is not absolutely certain that what they relate is Origen's true thought. On the other hand, the text of his great apologetic work, the Contra Celsum, survives in its entirety and in Greek.[266]

As with Plotinus, Origen's thought begins with the idea of the supreme reality--God--and ends with the concept of union with Him. However, considerably different from Plotinus and the other Platonists of the period, Origen stresses that the soul's ascent and union with God can only be achieved by means of God's continuous revelation of His grace and not merely by means of speculation through the individual soul's insight. The continuous revelation of God's grace is of prime importance in Origen's thought, and determines both his opinion of Greek philosophical thought and the way by which the individual soul can be reunited with God.

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[266] J. Danielou, Origen, trans. by W. Mitchell (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), pp. XII-XIV.

Following the Platonic tradition, Origen stresses the absolute immateriality of God. God, he claims, should not be thought to be any kind of body, nor to exist in a body.[267] He argues against the Stoic doctrine of God as a fiery material substance, and against the Epicurean theory of the gods, who are composed of lifeless atoms, and thus subject to change and dissolution.[268] In terms reminiscent of the Middle Platonists and Plotinus, Origen describes God as a simple and indivisible intellectual nature, permitting no addition of any kind. There is in Him no greater or smaller, no higher or lower. He is wholly one, the Monad, the Unit, Mind, the source from which all intellectual nature or mind takes its beginning.[269] Being Mind, God is incorporeal and eternal. Origen provides proof for the immateriality and eternality of God by arguing from the immateriality of mind. He also uses the same argument to prove the immateriality and immortality or eternality of man's rational soul.[270]

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[267] Princ. I. 1:6.

[268] Cels. IV. 13-14; Princ. I. 1:1ff.

[269] Princ. I. 1:6; Comm. John I. 20ff; Cels. IV. 14.

Origen contends that the functioning of the mind is independent of space and bodily magnitude. Mind neither requires space in which to move and operate, nor is affected by it, as is bodily or material nature. Its nourishment does not come through material substances, as does the body's, but through intellectual activity and knowledge, which are incorporeal. Moreover, its growth is not in a physical sense, but in an intellectual sense. Its growth does not follow the same pattern as the body. Even when a body reaches the state of full growth, the mind can continue to grow through mental activity. In particular, mind is capable of perceiving, understanding and retaining the incorporeal and eternal intellectual truths, a feat which a bodily or material nature is not able to achieve. Thus, mind must be superior to any bodily nature; it must be incorporeal and eternal.[271] Origen concludes that if mind is free from the limitations of the physical world, is incorporeal and eternal, God, who is the source of all intellectual existence or mind, is also incorporeal and eternal.[272] Being incorporeal, God is also immutable and impassible. Adopting Plato's terminology,[273] Origen states that God is beyond space and time. He transcends all, self-sufficient and self-contained, beyond thought and being.[274] God does not participate in being, He is participated in rather than participates.[275]

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[270] The immateriality and eternality of the individual soul is discussed in Chapter VI.

[271] Princ. I. 1:6-7; IV. 4:9-10.

God is also incomprehensible, for He is greater than anything man can know or that can be measured. Although transcendent and incomprehensible, He may be known through the beauty of his works, and He makes His presence known to all. All are aware of His providence, and He reveals Himself to those who are worthy, the pure in heart, in accordance with their ability to perceive Him.[276] Despite Origen's abstractions in determining God's essence, God is not for him the impersonal and inactive first-god of the Middle Platonists and the One of Plotinus.

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[272] Ibid.

[273] Cf. Republic 509B.

[274] Cels. VI. 62, 64; VII. 38ff.

[275] Cels. VI. 64.

[276] Princ. I. 1:5, 6, 9; Cels. VII. 42.

God is for Origen a personal and active being. As spirit, God has within Himself the power to act, He is intelligent, possessed of self-consciousness and will.[277] Although he denies that God can possess the typically human passions, i.e., that He can be disturbed by passions and unreasonable behavior, he does not regard Him as devoid of all attributes. God, he claims, is long-suffering, merciful and pitiful. He is not impassible, but has the passion of Love.[278] Thus, God is not Absolute, but Perfect, the perfect being, perfect in all things. As a transcendent, simple and complete unity, God could not directly create a multiple and complex universe. An intermediary is needed, a being who is one yet shares in the multiplicity and complexity of the created beings.[279] This intermediary is the Son or Logos.

The Logos in Origen's thought bears certain similarities to the second god of Numenius and of Albinus and to Plotinus' World Nous and Soul. According to Origen, the Son or Logos is the first-born of God, the first stage in the transition from the One to the Many. He is the perfect image of God, His wisdom, the reflection of His glory and perfection, the sum-total of His world-ideas.[280] The Logos did not have His beginning in time; He is eternally generated from the essence of the Father, through the outpouring of God's splendor and omnipotence.[281] Origen compares the generation of the Logos to an act of the will arising from an inner necessity and proceeding from the mind, without either cutting off any part of the mind or being separated or divided from it.[282] As the direct manifestation of God, the Logos is incorporeal, immutable and perfect.[283] Proceeding from the essence of the Father's power, there was never a time when the Logos did not exist.[284] Origen states that there exists no reason or possibility to think that God ever existed without His wisdom and power, or to assume of a beginning of His begetting.[285] Therefore, the Logos dwells from all eternity with God, in eternal contemplation of Him, eternally receiving from God the power, principles and ideas of all reality.[286]

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[277] Comm. John XXXII. 28.

[278] Hom. Ezechial VI. 6; Hom. Num. XXIII. 2.

[279] Comm. John I. 20.

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[280] *Princ.* I. 2:2, 6; *Cels.* VI. 64.

[281] *Comm.* *John* XIII. 25; *Hom.* *Jeremiah* IX. 4.

[282] *Princ.* I. 2:5, 6.

[283] *Ibid.*

[284] οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν *Princ.* I. 2:9; *Comm.* *Rom.* I. 5.

[285] *Ibid.*

As the image of God's power, the first stage from the simplicity of the One to the manifold, the Logos is less than the Father. He is often described as a "second God"; He is everything that the Father is but on a different or lower level.[287] Like Plotinus and other late Greek philosophers, Origen assumes the fundamental principle that the product is always inferior to the producer. While inferior to the Father, the Logos is superior to all other beings, even the highest. He is above everything, above all powers and dominions, everything that is known not only in this world but in the world to come. The Logos alone knows God in His entirety, and executes the Father's wish in every detail.[288] He is the intermediary both between God and the created world, and between the world and God. On the one hand, the Logos serves as God's agent in creation and revelation; He is the archetypal source of all rational beings and the creator, governing principle and vital energy of the world. At the same time, He is also the only means by which the created beings can attain knowledge of and union with God.[289] Thus, the Logos is the ultimate power through which the two movements, from the One to the multiple and the return to the One, are eternally reconciled.

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[286] Comm. John II. 2. The idea of activating by contemplation, where the second member of the divine triad receives the power and principles to create by contemplating the first, is also found in Numenius (Fr. 25, 27), Albinus (Did. 10:20; 14:25) and Plotinus (II. 4:5; V. 1:5, 7:1; VI. 7:12).

[287] Comm. John I. 22; Cels. V. 39; Comm. Matt. XV. 2ff; Princ. I. 2:12-13.

[288] Comm. John XIII. 25; XXXII. 28; Princ. I. 2:6.

The first creation of the Father through the Son or Logos is the Holy Spirit, the third stage in the procession of the godhead. Whereas the ideas of God and of the Logos are similar to the current Platonic cosmological view, the idea of the Holy Spirit can only be known from the Scriptures.[290] In discussing God and Logos, Origen speaks both as a philosopher and as a Christian. However, with regard to the Holy Spirit, he speaks primarily as a Christian. Origen states that the Holy Spirit is eternal and incorporeal, but the means by which it came into existence is not exactly known. All that is known about the Holy Spirit by the Church, is that It is equal in honor and dignity to the Father and the Son.[291] According to Origen, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son and is related to Him as the Son is related to the Father, i.e., It is inferior to Him. Origen arranged the persons of the Divine Triad in descending order, in a manner similar to the gods of the Middle Platonists and the divine principles of Plotinus. According to Origen, God, the Logos and the Holy Spirit form an eternal, divine triad, distinct and superior to the created world.[292]

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[289] Princ. I. 2:6-13.

[290] Princ. I. 3:1.

God's first creation was the intelligible world. This world consisted of a community of a definite number of rational beings, pure intelligences or minds,[293] which Origen calls logika (λογικά).[294] Although Origen speaks of the logika as being created, they were not created in time. Creation with respect to them means that they had a beginning, but not a temporal one. They were created from all eternity, but their beginning is difficult to conceptualize. It cannot be distinguished by periods of time, but is of the type that can only be contemplated and perceived by pure intellect and reason.[295] Origen claims that it is absurd to think that there was ever a time when God's power, wisdom and goodness were inactive.[296] Therefore, he maintains that there must always have been beings upon which God exercised His beneficence and governance.[297] Thus, the logika existed from all eternity. They existed as the thoughts of God, the eternal forms or ideas in the Mind or Wisdom of God, which is the Logos.[298] Origen claims that since God's Wisdom has always existed, then there always existed in God's Wisdom the form and outline of all created beings, which were then actualized by the Logos as agent.[299]

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[291] Princ. pref. 4; I. 3:5.

[292] Princ. I. 3:5-8.

[293] Princ. II. 9:1; I. 8:1, 4.

[294] Princ. II. 8:3; IV. 4:9.

Existing within the Logos and created by Him through an effluence of God's goodness and love, the logika were incorporeal, immortal and perfect, participating in the life of the Logos and in perfect communion with God.[300] Since there is neither diversity, change nor lack of power in God, He created all the beings equal and alike.[301] As created beings, the logika are necessarily subject to change and movement;[302] they do not inherently possess goodness in their being; it is given to them by God. Therefore, the power and freedom of movement and change was granted to them in order that the goodness which they possess through God's beneficence might become their own, by being preserved through their own free will. However, the logika grew weary of continuously contemplating God. Being lazy, they tended to neglect the good because it required too much effort.[303] Their neglect of the good gave rise to its withdrawal, for what is granted may be taken away. This happens when the soul turns away from, or neglects, its goal--the good. To withdraw from the good means to become immersed in evil. Thus, rational beings fall into evil to the degree to which they withdraw from the good.[304] Like Plotinus and other contemporary Platonists, Origen upheld the Socratic-Platonic principle that a rational being would not deliberately and knowingly select evil. Therefore, he explains the fall of the rational beings as a result of their inherent changeability, their laziness or weariness which caused them to make the wrong choice, to neglect God and thus to fall into evil. As a result, the fall of the logika was not as Koch[305] maintains, a deliberate act caused simply by their complete freedom of choice. Freedom is for Origen the ability of the created spirit to change, to develop and grow by advancing toward God or to neglect the good, and become abased.

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[295] Princ. I. 2:2.

[296] Princ. I. 4:3.

[297] Ibid.

[298] Princ. I. 4:4-5; 2:2; Cels. V. 22, 29.

[299] Princ. I. 4:4-5.

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[300] Princ. II. 9:1, 6; IV. 4:9.

[301] Princ. II. 9:6.

[302] necessario convertibiles et mutabiles Princ. II. 9:2.

[303] Princ. II. 9:2.

[304] Ibid.

Having fallen away from God's love, the logika were estranged from Him and became "souls"--"psyche"--a term which Origen derived from "psychesthai", to grow cool.[306] A similar explanation for the term "psyche" is found in Plato[307] and mentioned by Aristotle.[308] It was also adopted by the Stoics, who believed that the soul springs from the cold air surrounding us, and that it first enters the body at the moment that the newborn child gasps its first breath.[309] The souls' estrangement from God caused them to lose their initial unity and equality and to take on various types of forms and material textures. The material and form of a soul's body was determined by the degree of its estrangement from God.

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[305] H. Koch, Pronoia und Paideusis (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1932), p. 117ff. Koch's error is noted by B. Otis, "Cappadocian Thought as a Coherent System," Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 12 (1958), p. 102, n.11.

[306] Princ. II. 8:3.

[307] Cf. Cratylus 399D-E.

[308] De Anima I. 2:405b.

Since the initial fall away from God, all rational beings possess a kind of bodily nature. According to Origen, although the body was created for the rational beings after their fall away from God, no rational being can ever exist without a body.[310] He firmly asserts that it is only the Holy Trinity that can exist without any bodily or material relationship.[311] Materiality is necessary to the existence of all created natures, and thus provides a distinct differentiation between the created and the uncreated--the Trinity. Although Origen sometimes speaks of rational beings as incorporeal,[312] he does not mean that they are immaterial in the same sense as the Trinity. Incorporeality with regard to the created beings does not mean the complete absence of any type of body. It means a body of a fine, ethereal and invisible nature, a body with a texture of such heavenly purity and clarity that it can only be conceived by God.[313] According to Origen, matter in itself is without form or qualities. It is a common, changeable substratum which is capable of receiving the forms of every type of body and capable of assuming the most diverse transformations.

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[309] Cf. Tertullian, De Anima 25, 27, ed. by J. H. Waszink (Amsterdam: J. M. Meulenhoff, 1947).

[310] Princ. I. 6:4; II. 2:2; IV. 3:15. The idea of the soul and its continual relationship with body is discussed in greater detail in Chapter VI.

[311] Ibid. J. Danielou, Origen, trans. by W. Mitchell (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), p. 219, thinks that these passages are merely interpolations of Rufinus, on the basis that they contradict Origen's thesis that in a previous existence all rational creatures were pure and they will ultimately return to that state. I do not agree with Danielou, as the discussion indicates.

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[312] Princ. I. 7:1ff.

[313] Princ. IV. 3:15; I. 6:4; also Jerome's version of this passage which substantiates this view. According to Jerome, in the consummation of things, bodies will be similar to air and sky, or to any clearer and purer body that can be conceived (in fine omnium hoc esse futura corpora, quod nunc est aër et caelum et si quod aliud corpus sincerius et purius intellegi potest Ep. ad Avitum 4); II. 3:2, 3, 7; III. 6:4; cf. frag. In John XIII., where Origen speaks of heavenly beings, such as saints and angels, as being incorporeal. He states that they are incorporeal in relation to the earthly bodies; the material of their bodies is of a fine ethereal texture.

Gross material elements may be refined into a finer or more subtle state, while fine ethereal bodies may become coarse and heavy. The texture and form of a body depends on the will and moral development of the individual being.[314] The more an individual soul advances towards God, the finer the shape and texture of the body in which it is enveloped. On the other hand, the more a soul's will is opposed to God's, the coarser its material and the more unattractive its bodily form.[315] Although it is not clearly stated in Origen, it appears that the rational beings or minds, when they began their fall away from God, were first enveloped in a body of a fine ethereal nature. As their love of God continued to "cool" and they fell further away from Him, the form and texture of their bodies also changed in proportion to the degree of each being's estrangement from the Creator.[316]

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[314] Princ. II. 1:4, 2:2; Cels. III. 41; IV. 57; VI. 77.

[315] Ibid.

[316] Princ. I. 4:1 especially Jerome's version, 8:1ff. A similar view is found in Numenius, T. 47 and suggested by Plotinus, Enn. IV. 3:9, 15 and Albinus, Did. 16:28. According to Plotinus and the Middle Platonists, the soul, in its descent from the intelligible universe, is first enveloped in an ethereal body. As it descends further into the material universe, it acquires various grades of body.

All the rational creatures neglected God to varying degrees, with the exception of the soul of Christ.[317] However, God made the creatures for a purpose, that they might willfully and voluntarily enjoy perfect communion with Him. Therefore, He provided the discipline and means through which they should attain this end. He created bodies for them which express their character and serve as a medium for their training. The beings who fell only a short distance from God retained their ethereal nature, but in a somewhat coarser state. They became the stars, planets and the angels in their various degrees of hierarchy. Those creatures that fell a greater distance from God were embodied in earthly human frame. The rational beings who turned completely against God became demonic or evil spirits, and are clothed in dark, coarse and unattractive but invisible bodies.[318] Simultaneously with the bodies of the fallen beings, God created the material universe to serve as a place for educating and disciplining the souls, a place through which and from which the souls must rise to apprehend and become once again a part of the world of truth and ultimate reality.[319]

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[317] Princ. I. 8:3; II. 6:5, 9:2.

[318] Princ. I. 8:1-2, 7:4; II. 2:1, 9:2-3.

Thus, according to Origen, the sensible universe is not as the Gnostics believed, an accidental result of fallen spirits, but was created by God through His goodness and love as a penitential dwelling for fallen beings. Although a symptom of evil, the material universe is not in itself evil. It is a grand and beautiful creation, an image of the intelligible universe, God's second-best creation. It manifests God's goodness and love for the created beings, a means of restoring them to their original pure state.[320] The diversity existing within the created order--the hierarchies of angels, the demons, the many different types of heavenly bodies, and the various races and conditions among men--is not due to God's original intention for the logika, i.e., the logika are not originally created by God as manifesting this diversity. It is a result of the differences among the souls in the degree of their fall. The diversities are infinite in number, in order to allow for the different types of training and discipline necessary for every kind of nature.[321] Thus, an individual's status of birth and the conditions that befall him during his lifetime should not be directly attributed to God or to chance, but to the soul's conduct in its pre-existent state.[322] According to Origen, this created order is temporary; the end is always like the beginning.[323] All souls will one day be purified and be reunited with their Creator. At this time, the visible, material universe, which is only an intermediate phase, will cease to exist.

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[319] Princ. III. 5:4-5; Cels. VII. 50.

[320] Princ. II. 1:2; Comm. John XIX. 22.

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[321] Princ. II. 9:2-6; Cels. V. 29; Hom. Genesis XV. 5.

[322] Princ. I. 8:1; II. 9:6.

[323] Princ. I. 6:2.

Chapter VI

THE SOUL IN THE MATERIAL UNIVERSE

In Origen's thought, the material universe was created after the primal fall to provide a penitential dwelling for the rational beings that have lapsed from God. According to him, the present world-order is only one in an innumerable series of corresponding orders. There were ages before this world was made, and there will be others after it.[324] As with the intelligible universe, so was the material universe created by God, by means of the Logos, out of nothing--absolute non-being. Origen states that it is incomprehensible to him how so many philosophers have considered matter to be uncreated.[325] However, unlike the intelligible universe, the sensible world is not eternal. It was created in time and will end in time.[326] Within the material universe is a hierarchy of rational beings. This hierarchy begins with the archangels and descends downward through the various levels of angels and other heavenly beings, to men and finally to the demonic powers--the lowest level of being. Unlike

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[324] Princ. II. 3:4-5; III. 5:3.

[325] Princ. III. 5:4.

[326] Princ. I. 6:2, 8:4.

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Plotinus' structure of the world which was caused by a process of necessary emanation proceeding from the highest reality, Origen's hierarchy was due to the rational creatures' freedom of choice.[327] It was due to the diversity in the fall of the created beings, i.e., to the varying degree of their fall away from God.[328] Although of diverse parts and of many functions, the world is not one of internal discord, but is maintained in perfect order and balanced equilibrium by God's Providence through the Logos. The Logos governs and keeps in order the entire universe as a huge monstrous animal is held together by one soul, preventing the world from disintegration by guiding each soul within the world back to its proper place in the Divine.[329] In His function as governor and administrator of the universe, the Logos is similar to the soul of the world of the Middle Platonists and of Plotinus. As with the world soul of the philosophers, the Logos of Origen is the instrumental cause of the world's existence and the divine force from which all life is derived and sustained.

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[327] Princ. I. 6:1, II. 1:1.

[328] Ibid.

[329] Princ. II. 1:2-3; Comm. John VI. 30.

The Logos organizes the cosmos and envelops and supports it as the soul does the body.[330] However, unlike the world soul of the philosophers, Origen's Logos takes a personal interest in each soul. He guides and helps each one individually to return to its source, in accordance with each soul's need of Him and its ability to receive Him.[331]

As it has been mentioned previously, the earthly body and the material universe were created through the beneficence of God for the purpose of disciplining and educating the created spirits or souls to return to Him. Man has been placed on earth as in a place of affliction.[332] As a training school for souls, the sensible world is not the most comfortable place of existence for the soul, nor is it intended to be. While in the material universe, man is subject to all types of punishments, evils and afflictions. He is continuously struggling against the principalities and powers of wickedness and evil.[333] However, these misfortunes should not be counted against God's goodness, for they contribute to the training and pedagogy of the soul. Everything that happens in the world happens in accordance with God's divine plan and purpose. This does not mean that God wills all occurrences. God does not will evil or sinful acts, He wills only what is good. However, God often does not prevent evil acts from occurring. He permits them to happen and employs them as educational measures either for an individual, a group of individuals or for the whole universe.[334] Origen states that although God preserves the individual soul's freedom of choice, He, nonetheless, often uses the evil acts of men for the salvation either of an individual soul or for the whole universe.[335] However, it must be noted that this does not exonerate the individual who has committed the evil act. Origen claims that such an individual is none the less guilty.[336]

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[330] Ibid. Cf. Numenius, Fr. 20, 25, 27; Albinus, Did. 10:20ff. and Plotinus, Enn. IV. 3:9ff., 8:3ff.

[331] The guidance and aid of the Logos in the individual soul's ascent to God is discussed in Chapter VII.

[332] ἐταπείνωσας ἡμαξ ἐν τόπῳ κακώσεως.....λέγων τὸν περίγειον τόπον.. Cels. VII. 50.

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[333] Princ. III. 2:1-2.

[334] Cels. IV. 69-70; VI. 53ff.; VII. 68; Princ. III. 2:6-7. Origen derives this argument from the Stoic doctrine of theodicy; cf. Plutarch, Moralia 1050E, 1065B.

[335] God's use of men's evil actions as educational measures is discussed in detail in Princ. III. 1:7-14 and in Comm. Exodus X. 27, which is preserved in the Philocalia, Chapter XXVII. Also, cf. Cels. IV. 70ff; Hom. Num. XIV. 2.

[336] Cels. IV. 70; Hom. Num. XIV. 2.

According to Origen, God is like a physician. He alone knows both the disease and the remedy and can mete out the time of healing.[337] Each soul's life in the material universe is guided and regulated by God in accordance with the soul's moral conduct in a prior state and with the soul's present attitude. However, although God attempts to train and purify the soul, nothing can be accomplished without man voluntarily submitting himself to God's power. God cannot persuade an individual to return to Him, unless the individual is willing to listen to God's persuasions and is willing to agree to them.[338] In addition to the external pressures, man is beset by an internal struggle of human temptations which arise as a result of his nature.

Origen's view of the nature of man is vague and inconsistent. This is because he makes no attempt to present a definite doctrine. Man's nature is not clearly defined in the Scriptures and teachings of the Church.[339] Therefore, Origen merely presents and discusses the two views found in and substantiated by the Scriptures, (1) that man possesses two souls, a rational and an irrational and (2) that man possesses one soul, a part of which is rational and a part irrational. The decision as to which view is preferable he leaves to the reader.[340] Origen states that man is of a threefold nature. He consists of a rational spirit, soul and body.[341] In accordance with the Scriptures, Origen sometimes speaks of man's rational part as spirit or rational soul. At other times, he speaks of one soul in man and distinguishes two parts within it, a rational and an irrational part, which correspond respectively to man's spirit and soul.[342] The spirit or rational part of man descends or is implanted from heaven and joins with the earthly body by means of an irrational or earthly soul, and this constitutes the being "man". The earthly soul is produced along with the earthly body and it cannot subsist apart from it.[343] The ambiguity concerning the nature of the human soul is not pecular to Origen. Similar statements concerning the soul's "parts" are found in the thought of Numenius,[344] Albinus[345] and Plotinus.[346] The division of the soul into "parts" or levels is a means of explaining the soul's amphibiousness; its affinity and association both in the world of intellect and the world of sense. It is an attempt to explain how and to what degree the soul, as an intellectual substance and a member of the intelligible world, participates in the concerns of matter and the material universe.

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[337] Princ. II. 9:3ff.; III. 5:4.

[338] Cels. VI. 55ff. The individual's freedom of choice its ascent to God is discussed in detail below and in Chapter VII.

[339] Princ. pref. 5.

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[340] Princ. III. 4:5.

[341] Princ. III. 4:1; II. 8:1-5; IV. 2:4; Hom. Lev. V, 1, 5.

[342] Ibid.

[343] Princ. III. 4:1-2.

With regard to man's rational part or mind, Origen claims that it is created by the Logos of God, in the image of God, and shares or partakes of the divine essence.[347] Even though the rational spirit has been estranged from God and has become a soul, nevertheless, it always retains within it a spark of the Divine, a germ of goodness.[348] Participating in the essence of God, man's rational spirit cannot fall into sin completely, a part of it must remain intact. As an image of God, the rational soul of man is immortal, incorruptible and incorporeal.[349] Origen states that it is impious to say that man's rational soul or mind, which is capable of perceiving and understanding God and is capable by its own efforts of imitating God and attaining likeness of Him, can ever cease to exist.[350] Another proof of the soul's immortality and incorruptibility can be shown by the fact that the soul is distinct from the earthly body and separable from it.[351] The soul not only survives the earthly body, but by the power of God also remembers its former existence.[352] The fact that the soul retains a memory of its former life is further proof of its immortality. As a created being, the soul possesses all its attributes through God's power or will. Therefore, as Wolfson[353] points out, the soul's immortality is not by its own nature, but by God's will. The soul, having been created by God and sharing in His nature, will not be destroyed by Him, but God could destroy the soul if He so willed.[354]

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[344] T. 36, 39; Fr. 16; see above p. 10ff.

[345] Did. 23:32; 24:32; see above p. 24ff.

[346] Enn. II. 9:2; III. 6:2ff.; IV. 4:28; 9:3; see above p. 49ff.

[347] Princ. IV. 4:9-10; Comm. John I. 34; II. 3; VI. 38.

[348] Princ. III. 4:2; IV. 4:9-10.

[349] Princ. IV. 4:9; Cels. VII. 32; Exhort. to Martyr. 47.

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[350] Princ. IV. 4:9-10.

[351] Cels. II. 60; VII. 5, 32; Princ. II. 3:2.

[352] Princ. II. 10:4. Similar arguments concerning the eternality of the soul are found in Numenius, Fr. 13, 23, 24; T. 29, 39, Albinus, Did. 25:33, 34 and Plotinus Enn. IV. 3:26, 27; 7:11-15.

[353] H. A. Wolfson, "Immortality of the Soul and Resurrection in the Philosophy of the Church Fathers," Harvard Divinity Bulletin, 22 (1956/57), p. 9ff.

[354] Ibid. p. 10.

Origen states that man's rational soul or mind, being an image of the Divine Mind, is also incorporeal. He argues against the Stoic doctrine that conceives of soul as a fiery material substance or "pneuma", and against the Epicurean theory of the soul as a compound of lifeless atoms.[355] Origen claims that soul or mind cannot be of a bodily or material nature, because body is in a continual state of flux and transformation and subject to dissolution. Also, body is inanimate, having no life of its own nor capable of producing life.[356] Soul, on the other hand, is the principle of life and the organizing force of the body. Thus, soul must be non-material and imperishable.[357] Moreover, in its functions, soul or mind is independent of time, space and bodily aptitude, which affect and control bodily nature.[358] The mind's nourishment is not derived through material substances, as is the body's, but through mental activity which is incorporeal. Furthermore, its growth is not in a physical sense, but in an intellectual sense; and its growth does not follow the same pattern as the body. The mind can continue to grow even when the body has reached its full growth. In particular, the mind is capable of discerning and understanding the incorporeal, eternal, divine truths, a task impossible for a bodily or material nature. Thus, the rational soul must be superior to any material nature.[359]

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[355] Cels. IV. 13-14; VI. 71; Princ. I. 1ff.

[356] De Orat. VI. 1; Princ. III. 4:2; Comm. John XIII. 33; Cels. VIII. 19.

[357] Cels. VII. 32; VIII. 19; Princ. I. 1:6.

[358] Princ. I. 1:6.

Although Origen argues that the soul is in its own nature incorporeal, he claims that it cannot exist without a body.[360] According to him, no being other than the Holy Trinity can live apart from a body.[361] Since the fall of the logika, no rational beings, with the exception of the Trinity, have ever existed, nor can exist, apart from a bodily relationship.[362] Like Plotinus, Origen adopted the Platonic theory popular at the time, of the celestial or ethereal body which envelops all souls.[363] He states that the rational beings, when they first lapsed from God, were enveloped in a body of a fine, ethereal and invisible nature.[364] As a soul fell further away from God, the nature of its body changed. It changed from a fine, ethereal and invisible body to a body of a coarser and more solid state, inproportion to the degree of its fall. However, as an individual soul purifies itself and turns back to God, the nature of its body is transformed back into a purer and more subtle state. The purity and subtleness of the body with which a soul is enveloped depends on the moral development and perfection of the soul to which it is joined.[365] Origen states that there are varying degrees of purity and subtleness even among the celestial and spiritual bodies.[366]

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[359] Princ. I. 1:6-7; Comm. John XIII. 33. Origen's arguments for the soul's incorporeality are also found in Plotinus, expressed in almost similar terms; cf. Enn. IV. 7:2-8, 3:26; III. 1:3; V. 1:3. Similar arguments are also found in Numenius, Fr. 13, 23, 24; T. 29, 39 and Albinus, Did. 25:33. A more detailed comparison of the arguments for the soul's incorporeality used by Origen and Plotinus, and a comparison of their arguments with those of Albinus and Numenius, are presented in Chapter VIII.

[360] Cels. VII. 32; Princ. I. 7:1; II. 2:2; IV. 3:15.

[361] Princ. I. 6:4; II. 2:1-2; IV. 3:15.

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[362] materialem vero substantiam...pro ipsis (rationabiles naturas) vel post ipsas effectam videri, sed numquam sine ipsa eas vel vixisse vel vivere Princ. II. 2:2; also II. 3:2; IV. 3:15.

[363] Cf. E. R. Dodds, Proclus, the Elements of Theology (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1963), Appendix II. A comparison of Origen's and Plotinus' views of the ethereal body, and parallel views found in the thought of Numenius and Albinus, are found in Chapter VIII.

[364] Princ. I. 4:1, 8:1ff.

In contrast to Plotinus' doctrine that it is possible for a completely purified soul to discard its ethereal body,[367] Origen teaches that the body is permanently attached to the soul, and like the soul is eternal.[368] According to him, the soul's body is capable of being transformed, in accordance with the soul's dignity and perfection, but it can never be destroyed nor discarded by the soul.[369] Similar to Plotinus who claims that the ethereal body contains within it the vegetative or life principle of the body, Origen places within the ethereal body the form or "eidos" of the individual body.[370] According to Origen, this form is distinctive in each individual and remains eternally unchanged.[371] The concept of the ethereal body is of great importance to Origen's view of the resurrected body. By maintaining its perpetuity, and placing within it the distinctive form of each individual body, Origen is able to preserve the individual identity of each earthly body with its resurrected spiritual body.[372]

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[365] Cels. III. 41; IV. 41, 57; VI. 77; VII. 32; Princ. II. 1:4, 2:2.

[366] Princ. II. 10:2.

[367] Enn. III. 6:5; IV. 3:24.

[368] Princ. I. 6:4; II. 2:2; IV. 3:15.

[369] Ibid.

[370] In Psalm I. 5; Cels. V. 18, 19, 22ff.; VII. 32; Princ. II. 10:3.

Thus, when Origen refers to a pure spirit as being incorporeal, he does not mean that it is completely without body. The term "incorporeal" as used by Origen with regard to the rational beings does not have the same meaning as it does in the writings of the Greek philosophers. Origen points out that the term "incorporeal" does not appear anywhere in the Scriptures.[373] The Scriptural equivalent of the term is different from or unlike the earthly body in texture.[374] As it has previously been stated, incorporeality with regard to the created beings denotes a substance of a fine, ethereal and invisible nature conceived only by the mind.[375] Although the soul is in its own nature wholly incorporeal, it cannot exist without a body, a body suited to its place of habitation. Since the initial fall away from God, no rational being has existed or can exist apart from a body. The soul takes on various types of bodies, in accordance with the nature of its environment. When it resides on earth, it takes on an earthly body, which is visible and of a solid nature. However, when the soul ascends to the heavenly regions, its body takes on a purer, ethereal and invisible nature, appropriate to the heavenly environment.[376] The heavenly body is sometimes referred to as incorporeal, because of its heavenly purity and clarity and because it is perceptible only to the mind.[377]

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[371] Ibid.

[372] Origen's doctrine of the resurrection of the body is given below.

[373] "Ὄνομα ἀσωμάτου οὐκ ἴσασιν οὐ μόνον οἱ πολλοί, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἡ γραφή... Princ. pref. 8; also IV. 3:15.

[374] Ibid.

Following the popular Platonic concept, Origen states that the soul stands midway between the body and the mind, and fluctuates between the two.[378] The term "soul" in this context refers to man's discursive or reasoning faculty, the part of man which constitutes his distinct and particular individuality.[379] Origen claims that man's reasoning faculty is of an indifferent character, receptive to either vice or virtue. Thus, it can unite either with the spirit-mind, or with the body, or it can remain midway between the two.[380] A parallel view is found in Plotinus. According to him, man's reasoning faculty, man's self, stands midway between the purely intellectual or rational soul and the complex of soul and body. This part of the soul can join with the rational part, with the complex of body and soul, or remain a separate power and fluctuate between the two.[381]

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[375] Princ. I. 6:4; II. 2:2; 3:2-3, 7; III. 6:4; IV. 3:15; In John frag. XIII.

[376] Cels. VII. 32; Origen, ap. Methodius De Resurretione I. 22:3-5; Princ. II. 2:2; 3:2; IV. 3:15.

[377] Princ. pref. 8; I. 6:4; II. 2:2; IV. 3:15; In John frag. XIII.

[378] Princ. II. 8:4; III. 4:2-4; Comm. John XXXII. 18.

Origen claims that man's struggle consists of the attempt of the mind and the body to gain control of the soul. The choice that the soul makes determines man's actions and individuality. If the mind attains mastery, man achieves likeness to God; if the body wins, man is plunged into evil and is controlled by the passions and desires.[382] However, the body in itself is not evil. In its own proper nature it is completely inert, unable to feel or experience anything.[383] Therefore, the passions and emotions belong to the synthesis of body and soul, to the body animated by soul. However, the animated body is not the true cause of evil, but the choice that the soul makes. Origen never condemns the body nor regards it as a principle of evil. According to him, evil exists only in the will of the soul.[384] In his intermediate position between the angels and the demons, man is subjected to the influence of both the angels and the demons. His moral struggle is made more difficult by the demons and made easier by the angels. Every man has a guardian angel who aids and encourages him to return to his original state of purity, and an evil angel who tries to lure him into evil.[385] As in many of the writings of his time, the idea of angels and demons as ministers and governors of the various elements in the sensible world dominates Origen's view of the condition of man and of the world.[386] Although Origen recognizes the power of the angels and claims that they should be revered, he emphatically condemns all angel-worship.[387] Thus, according to Origen, all of life is a struggle among unseen powers, evil powers striving against the good to gain dominance of man. However, man at all times possesses within himself the power or faculty to choose between good and evil, to follow the divine call or submit to the temptation of evil.[388] According to Origen, freedom of choice is an eternal attribute of man's rational nature and rests solely with the individual person. Nonetheless, nothing that happens to man is without God's knowledge and providential guidance. However, God's guidance never interferes with man's freedom of choice. God persuades, admonishes, sustains and rewards, but never constrains nor in any way overrules the free will of the individual soul.[389]

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[379] Princ. III. 4:2-4.

[380] Princ. II. 8:4, 10:7; III. 4:2-4; Comm. John XXXII. 18.

[381] Cf. Enn. II. 9:2; V. 3:3. For a discussion of the soul as a kind of "middle", both in pagan and Christian thought, during the early centuries of the Christian era cf. W. Theiler, Untersuchungen zur Antiken Literatur (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970), p. 554-563.

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[382] Princ. III. 4:2-4.

[383] Corporis...quidem naturae suae morturum est Princ. III. 4:2; also Cels. III. 42.

[384] Cels. IV. 14-15, 65.

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[385] Princ. III. 2:1-4, 3:4; Hom. Num. XI. 4; XX. 3; Cels. VIII. 64; De Orat. XXXI. 5; Comm. Matt. XIII. 5.

[386] Hom. Jer. X. 6; Hom. Jos. XXII. 3; Hom. Num. XIV. 2; Hom. Ezech. IV. 2; Cels. VIII. 31; Princ. I. 8:1-4; III. 3:3. A good discussion of Origen's view of the work of angels and demons can be found in J. Danielou, Origen, trans. by W. Mitchell (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), Part III., chapt. 2.

[387] Cels. V. 4, 11-12; VIII. 31; Hom. Num. IX. 11; Hom. Ezech. IV. 2.

[388] Princ. I. 6:3; III. 1:1-6; De Orat. XXIX. 13.

The question of the freedom of the individual will is of great importance to Origen and constitutes the ethical basis of his thought. He devotes the major portion of the third book of the De Principiis and the sixth chapter of the De Oratione to the problem. Origen attempts to establish the existence and explain the nature of free-will by drawing on numerous passages both from the Old and New Testament. However, as Jackson[390] correctly points out, Origen's doctrine of free-will is dependent more upon the Platonic and Stoic theories of freedom than upon Scripture. According to him, Origen combines the Platonic transcendental view of freedom, i.e., that a rational soul is distributed in each epoch of its life in accordance with its exercise of freedom in the preceeding epoch, with the Stoic analysis of the internal structure of freedom. He then modifies these views with Scriptural doctrines.[391]

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[389] Cels. VI. 57; Princ. III. 1:19; De Orat. VI. 3.

[390] B. Darrell Jackson, "Sources of Origen's Doctrine of Freedom," Church History, 35 (1966), pp. 13-23. Mr. Jackson carefully examines the possible philosophical sources for Origen's non-Scriptural theories.

Origen bases his proof of the existence and nature of freedom on the principle of movement and the type of movement. He distinguishes between those movements which arise from within and those that originate from without.[392] Origen claims that some things, such as logs of wood and stones and all things which are held together by the constitution of their material or by their physical structure, are moved solely from without (ἔξωθεν). Things such as animals, plants, fire and springs and others, which are held together by their structure or by soul, are moved from within (ἐν αὑτοῖς). Of the latter group there are two types, the non-living (ἄφυχα) who are moved out of themselves (ἐξ αὑτῶν) and the living or ensouled things (ἔμφυχα) who are moved from within themselves (ἀφ' αὑτῶν). The ensouled beings include the animals and the rational beings. Animals possess the imaginative faculty which produces images or impressions. The images call forth the various impulses, and it is by these impulses that the animal is moved. For example, the image of a web arises in a spider, and the impulse to weave it follows. Similarly, in the bee there is an impulse to produce a honeycomb. However, man possesses, in addition to the imaginative faculty, a reasoning faculty--a logos. This enables him to judge the images which arise and to determine which are worthy to be acted upon and which should be rejected. When man selects the right images he is praised, when he chooses the evil ones he is condemned.[393] It is not within man's power to control the images or impressions which are presented to him. However, man through the use of his reasoning faculty can decide how to use these impressions. To deny that man is capable of judging the uncontrollable external impressions, that he is incapable of being moved from within (δι'αὐτῶν), is to say that man is not a rational being, that he is not even a living animal.[394]

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[391] Ibid. p. 15-22.

[392] Princ. III. 1:2; this is also preserved in the Philocalia XXII.; De Orat. VI. 1.

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[393] _Ibid._

Since man is not controlled by external images and impressions and can accept or reject them as he sees fit, there is no justification for blaming external causes for our sins.[395] Thus, according to Origen, freedom pertains not only to the rational being's ability to move from one state to another, but also to the use that the rational being makes of the impressions that are presented to it. It is man's responsibility to elevate his reasoning power to a higher level by educating and disciplining it. In this way he will be better able to distinguish among impressions and reject the ones that would lead him to evil.[396] Man's use of his free-will determines his status in this life and the next. The concept of freedom is more strongly developed in Origen than in Plotinus. To Origen, freedom of the soul is movement either towards the good or towards evil.

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[394] *Princ*. III. 1:3; *De Orat*. VI. 2.

[395] *Princ*. III. 1:4-5.

[396] *Princ*. III. 1:4.

According to Plotinus, freedom belongs only to the individual who lives in accordance with reason, above the states of the body and the material universe. Moreover, Plotinus claims that free movement is only that movement which is toward the good.[397]

According to Origen, God has been aiding and attempting to train the souls to make the right choices and to improve their status ever since the original fall. God has never ceased to be concerned with the salvation of man. By means of the Logos, He has been training and educating mankind from the time of creation. To Origen, the whole of history has been influenced by Divine Providence, God's plan for the salvation of mankind. His thought represents a true philosophy of history. Origen's view of human history encompasses both the facts of biblical history and the history of Greek thought. Origen claims that in every generation, God's wisdom has descended into the souls of the pious in order that they might help their contemporaries to convert to the ways of God.[398] The souls who were invested with the Divine Spirit, namely the prophets, St. John the Baptist and other holy men, were rational spirits who had not fallen very far from God. They were clothed with human bodies not because of their own sins, but so that they might be of help to others who were struggling with temptation and to provide them with knowledge of the truth.[399]

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[397] Enn. III. 1:9-10; VI. 8:3-4, 7.

[398] Cels. IV. 7.

Origen identifies three separate major progressive revelations of God--the natural law, the Mosaic Law and the incarnation of the Logos. The natural law is the conscience or rational reasoning that is inherent in all rational beings--men, angels and sidereal spirits alike. No human being has followed this law completely. However, some men to a great extent have been guided by the law of reason, and for this they shall be rewarded.[400] According to Origen, the ancient philosophers, both Greek and barbarian, represent examples of men who were guided by reason. However, they had not advanced far enough; none had advanced beyond the stage of polytheism to the true worship of God. Furthermore, none of the ancient philosophers ever succeeded in implanting his version of the truth among the various nations, or for that matter among the majority of individuals in a single nation.[401] Thus, although implanted by the Logos, the law of reason is insufficient to deliver man from sin and convert him to a more virtuous life.[402] The Mosaic Law, with its rules of conduct and sacrificial system, provided additional training and preparation; and for a time it helped to check the progression of sin and error. However, the ceremonial prescriptions of the Law were not sufficient to achieve the complete salvation of mankind. They had been revealed only to the Hebrews and were only symbols, a preparation for the more advanced knowledge that was to be disclosed.[403]

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[399] Cels. VI. 7; Comm. John II. 24, 25; XIII. 43ff.; Comm. Matt. XII. 30

[400] Comm. Romans II. 7; III. 3-7; V. 1.

Finally, the Logos Himself appeared to mankind in order to show all men, not only a privileged few, the way to blessedness and union with God. The incarnation of the Logos represents God's pre-eminent act of redemption of mankind. It was the Logos' greatest attempt to reconcile mankind with God by becoming the example and model for its salvation.[404] From the beginning of creation, the Logos was united with a rational spirit, a spirit which had chosen the good with unshakable resolve. At a particular point in time, the spirit that was joined to the Logos assumed a human body and became a human soul. Together with the human body, the soul advanced until it became divine.[405] According to Origen, the various functions and attributes of the incarnated Logos are as a ladder, by which man advances step by step from his present bodily state to pure spirit. This can be accomplished through the soul's diligent imitation of Christ and through Christ's continual help and guidance, His constant enlightenment of the soul at every step of the way back to its spiritual state.[406]

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[401] Cels. V. 43; VI. 1-5; VII. 47, 49; Princ. IV. 1:1.

[402] Cels. VI. 2.

[403] Princ. IV. 3:9-14; Cels. II. 2; V. 31; VII. 7; Comm. John VI. 3, 4; XIII. 48.

Origen believes that the incarnation of the Logos is not the final stage in God's progressive revelation to man. A fourth stage, which Origen calls "the Eternal

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[404] Princ. IV. 4:4; Cels. VI. 68.

[405] Princ. II. 6:3-7; IV. 4:4; Cels. III. 41; IV. 15.

[406] Comm. John II. 8; Cels. VII. 32, 43-44; De Orat. XXIX. 19; Princ. III. 2:2, 5. The soul's spiritual ascent is discussed in detail in Chapter VII.

Gospel", a phrase which he derives from the Book of Revelation,[407] is still to come. The Eternal Gospel will be fully revealed at the end of the aeon, at the second parousia, when men shall have been transformed from earthly to spiritual beings. At that time, the Gospel will completely disclose to spiritual men the mystery of God's truths. These truths could not be given to man before, either in the Old or New Testament, because of the limitations of the human language and man's inability to preceive them, due to his earthly nature.[408] Origen claims that although the contents of the Eternal Gospel are hidden from earthly man, parts of it can be discerned by those who, because of their purity of spirit, are able to understand the mystical sense of the Scriptures.[409]

The education and purification of man is not confined only to this life, but it continues even after death. According to Origen, there is no soul that has been completely purified in this life. Even the most pious saints, such as St. Peter and St. Paul, required additional purification.[410] Origen adopts the terminology of the popular doctrine of astral or celestial eschatology found in many of the writings of the second-third centuries.[411] In similar terms, he states that after death the souls of the good go to a remote place of the earth, an earthly paradise, which was probably situated somewhere within or beneath the earth.[412] There they are taught the terrestrial truths and are given insight into the course of future events. In accordance with the individual soul's ability to apprehend these truths, the soul ascends from this lower paradise to the region of the air. There it understands the nature and reason of the ordering of that region. From there it ascends to the sphere of the planets, which Scripture calls heavens. In each sphere, the soul undergoes further purification and discovers the secrets of that region. Finally, after the soul has passed through each successive stage of the heavens and has been purified, with its body increasingly becoming more subtle in texture, it once again becomes a pure spirit. It rises in the pure ether to God and enters into the kingdom of heaven. There it contemplates the pure essences "face to face" and can see and comprehend the invisible mysteries.[413] In other words, the individual who has turned to Christ and has devoted his life on earth to the understanding of the divine truths, will enter into a state of greater awareness after death. Thus, he will be able to progress more rapidly to a spiritual state.

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[407] Rev. XIV. 6.

[408] Princ. III. 6:8; IV. 3:9, 13; Comm. John I. 9, 10; Comm. Romans I. 4; II. 5; Comm. Lev. XIII. 2.

[409] Princ. IV. 3:9, 13ff.; Comm. John I. 9, 10.

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[410] *Hom. Num.* XXV. 6.

[411] Cf. Numenius' T. 42-43, 46-47, 49 where he explains the soul's stages of descent and ascent. He states that the soul in order to become purified must traverse through the seven planetary spheres through which it had descended and divest itself of the passions and faculties that it had acquired on its descent to earth. Also in these spheres, the soul's life on earth is reviewed and its fate decided.

[412] Puto enim, quod sancti quique discedentes de hac vita, permanebunt in loco aliquo in terra posito, quem paradisum dicit Scriptura divina *Princ.* II. 11:6. Origen is not explicit about the location of the earthly paradise. However, according to the belief popular in his time, the "earthly paradise" was believed to be situated somewhere beneath the earth. Cf. F. Cumont, *After Life in Roman Paganism.* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1959), Chapter II., III.

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[413] Princ. II. 11:6-7.

The spheres of the heavens represent the levels or stages of purity through which the soul passes before it arrives at a purely spiritual state.[414]

The evil souls are unable to make the ascent. They remain beneath the earth in hell, where they undergo punishment by fire. According to Origen, the fires of hell are not material, but they are a state of mind. They are the torments of conscience, the soul's remembering of all its evil deeds.[415] Origen calls the fires of hell the penalty and torture of the soul's want of cohesion; it is the punishment the soul must experience because of its unstable and disordered condition.[416] However, God's judgment is not vindictive, but is used only for the purpose of educating and purifying. Therefore, the pains of hell which are disciplinary in purpose are temporary and not eternal.[417] The time will come when all souls, the souls of all men, angels, celestial beings and demons, will be purified and voluntarily will return to their original state of perfection.[418] Individual souls develop at different levels and speeds. Origen believes that it may take more than one aeon before it is achieved.[419] Nonetheless, God's infinite love and patience will prevail and will wear down the resistance of even the most rebellious souls. Even the devil himself will of his own free will acknowledge God's excellence and return to Him. God will then be all in all; all rational beings will have returned to Him and His rule will be universal.[420]

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[414] Princ. II. 11:3ff. The soul's ascent is discussed more explicitly in Chapter VII.

[415] Princ. II. 10:4-7; Cels. V. 15; VI. 26.

[416] Ibid.

[417] Princ. II. 10:4-6, 8; Cels. V. 16; VI. 25-26; Hom Ezekial I. 2.

Origen believes that since the fall, no rational spirit can ever exist without a body.[421] At the "apokatastasis", as Origen calls the restoration of all rational beings to their original state of purity and equality, men will be reunited with their bodies. However, Origen was not in complete agreement with the popular conception of the body which was held within the Church. He could not accept the popular notion that man will be resurrected with the same animal or earthly body which he possessed on earth.[422] Origen believed that the resurrected body will be the same as that which man inhabited on earth, but with a difference. It will be different because it will be spiritual, of a finer, more ethereal, quality than the earthly body and suitable to its heavenly environment.[423] Just as man's soul at the time of the "apokatastasis" will have become pure spirit, the body, which will continue to serve the spirit, will be purified and attain a spiritual quality and nature.[424] Although Origen was not in complete agreement with the Church's popular belief of the resurrection, nonetheless, he was determined to defend it against pagan criticism.[425] To do so, he attempted to present an explanation of the Christian doctrine which would be intelligible to his pagan contemporaries, and one that would also be fundamentally ture to the Christian tradition, as he understood it.

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[418] Princ. I. 6:1; II. 10:8.

[419] De Orat. XXVII. 15; Princ. II. 3:1-5; III. 5:3ff.; 6:6.

[420] Princ. II. 10:8; III. 6:2-3; Cels. VIII. 72.

[421] Princ. I. 6:4; II. 2:1-2; IV. 3:15.

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[422] Cels. V. 14, 18; Princ. III. 6:5ff.

[423] Princ. I. 8:4; II. 2:2, 10:1, 3; III. 6:4-6; Cels. VII. 32.

[424] Princ. II. 3:2; III. 6:6; Cels. VII. 32, and ap. Methodius De Resurrectione I. 22:4-5.

[425] Cels. V. 14-24; VII. 32; VIII. 49; In Psalm I. 5.

The explanation he advanced started with the basic presupposition that the individual soul of man is permanently enveloped or clothed with a body.[426] The material substratum (τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον)of the soul's body, as with the bodies of all rational beings, is of such a nature that it can undergo every type of transformation.[427] It changes in form and texture in accordance with the soul's moral development and perfection; it can change from a subtle and ethereal nature in its pure state, to one of a coarser and more solid state. However, as the soul is purified, the soul's body is also purified and returns to its original subtle, ethereal and invisible nature.[428] Furthermore, Origen maintains that each body possesses a distinctive or characteristic form or "eidos" (τὸ χαρακτηρίζον or τὸ σωματικὸν εἶδος).[429] It is this characteristic form which gives to the individual body its distinctive characteristics, its individual character. Unlike the material substance of the body which is in a state of constant flux, the form or "eidos" of the body always remains unchanged.[430] To further explain the individual form of the body, Origen describes it as a "logos spermatos" or "spermatikos", a Stoic concept which he adopted and modified.[431]

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[426] *Princ*. I. 6:4; II. 2:1-2; IV. 3:15; *Cels*. VII. 32.

[427] *Ibid*.

[428] *Princ*. II. 1:4, 2:2; *Cels*. III. 41ff.; IV. 56ff.; VI. 77.

[429] *In Psalm* I. 5.

The Stoics held that the "logoi spermatikoi" were active material forms, principles of energy through whose power or activity all individual things came into being. They were considered by the Stoics as seed powers, which organized and formed each individual thing and maintained its identity, and accounted for the continuity of the individual species.[432] In man, these generative principles were the cause of reproduction, were transmitted from parent to child and were responsible for the individual differences or characteristics both of the body and of the soul.[433] Origen agrees with the Stoics that the form of the body, the "logos spermatikos", is the seed power or energy of the body which gives to the body its individual characteristics and maintains its identity in the flux of ever-changing matter.[434] He also maintains that the logos is transmitted from parent to child during procreation and that it is the cause of the body's individual characteristics.[435] However, Origen does not agree with the Stoic notion that the logos is also the cause of the soul's development and character.[436] To do so would be to limit and endanger the free-will of the individual and thus remove the burden of moral actions and responsibilities from the individual. Therefore, Origen maintains that the spiritual development and character of the soul are completely determined by the free-will of the individual.[437]

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[430] Ibid.

[431] Cels. V. 22ff.; VII. 32; Princ. II. 10:3.

[432] F. Copleston, A History of Philosophy, Vol I, pt. 2: Greece and Rome, Image Books (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1946), p. 133.

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[433] Philo, Leg ad. Gaium 55; Cleanthes ap. Tertullian De Anima 5, Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta I, frag. 518, quoted in Tertullian De Anima, ed. by J. H. Waszink (Amsterdam: J. M. Meulenhoff, 1947), p. 129. See also, H. Chadwick, "Origen, Celsus, and the Stoa," Journal of Theological Studies, 48 (1947), p. 44.

[434] Cels. V. 18ff.; VII. 32; VIII. 49; Princ. II. 10:3.

[435] Comm. John XX. 2-6; In Psalm I. 5, Cels. V. 22-23.

[436] Comm. Matt. XIII. 26; also, Chadwick, "Origen, Celsus, and the Stoa," p. 44.

[437] Ibid.

Origen claims that it is the "logos spermatikos" inherent in each body that will resuscitate the body at the time of the resurrection, although the body will be of a different texture. Adopting the words of St. Paul,[438] Origen compares the resurrection to the growth of a grain of wheat which is buried in the earth, survives death and decomposition and is restored and refashioned as a stalk of wheat. In a similar way, the logos of the body will restore and refashion the body in its original form but the body will be of a nature suitable to its new environment.[439] Thus, the resurrected body will have the same individuality as the animal body of its earthly existence but its texture will be different from that of the earthly body. It will be of a subtle, ethereal and invisible nature, suited to the conditions of the heavenly realm in which it is to dwell.[440]

Once the rational beings have returned to their original state of purity, it is uncertain whether they would remain in that state. Origen claims that the freedom of the will is an eternal attribute of the rational spirits. Thus it is possible that the rational spirits may lapse or fall again. Origen does not take a definite stand on the question of whether the souls, once restored to their original purity, will fall again. In fact, he sometimes avoids giving a definite answer.[441] However, he seems to favor the view that once the souls have united with God, their love for Him would be so strong that they could not possibly fall away from God again.[442]

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[438] I. Cor. XV. 36-44

[439] Princ. II. 10:3ff.; III. 6:4-6; Cels. V. 18-24; In Psalm I. 5.

[440] Princ. II. 2:2, 10:3; III. 6:6; cf. Cels. III. 41ff.

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[441] Cels. IV. 69; VIII. 72.

[442] Comm. Romans IV. 16 (Greek fragment); VIII. 38-39; Comm. Matt. XII. 34; Comm. Cantic. I.; III. (IV.) 14.

Chapter VII

THE SOUL'S ASCENT AND UNION WITH GOD

In a manner similar to Plotinus and other contemporary Platonists, Origen maintained that man's goal in life should be to realize his true nature, which is divine, and to strive to regain his original pure state and likeness to God. However, Origen's notion of the spiritual life is not primarily philosophically oriented, but is inspired by the Scriptures. Although Origen makes use of several concepts and of terminology found in contemporary philosophical thought, his view of the soul's ascent and union with God is first and foremost a result of Biblical scholarship. His thought is a carefully thought out process of allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures, based on the Alexandrian tradition.[443] By means of allegorical exegesis, Origen discovered and interpreted the deeper truths or mysteries that are hidden under the letter of Scripture, and within these deeper truths he also found the concepts and theses of Greek philosophy.

Allegorism in the interpretation of the Scriptures had been in use at Alexandria long before the time of Origen. It had been applied to the Old Testament by the Jews and to the New Testament by the Gnostics. Philo systematically applied the method of allegory to derive from the Old Testament both a literal and a spiritual meaning. The Gnostics used allegory to interpret the Gospel of St. John in the interest of Valentinian theology;[444] and Clement of Alexandria practised and encouraged allegorical exegesis. He regarded it as part of the Church's rule of faith, and attributes both a literal and spiritual meaning to the Scriptures.[445] Origen continued the Alexandrian tradition of allegorizing the Scriptures, finding the true and deeper meaning of the Scriptures in the philosophical concepts which lie beneath its historical husk, and thus attempted to bring into accord, systematically, the philosophy of Christianity with its documents.

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[443] Cf. Princ. IV. 3:3-10.

Thus, according to Origen, the Bible contains both a dogmatic and a mystical or spiritual interpretation.[446] In accordance with his spiritual development, an individual can find in Scripture, and only in Scripture, the way to knowledge of God and to the soul's ultimate perfection.[447] This does not mean that Origen was opposed to the study and use of philosophy. He believed that philosophy was a valuable preparation for revealed theology. The Bible, he claims, does not discourage the study of philosophy. It encourages it as a valuable tool for understanding the truth of God's revelation.[448] However, philosophy is not indispensable in order to receive God's truths, nor is it adequate to lead man to the understanding of the ultimate truth.[449] This can be accomplished only through divine gnosis or wisdom, which is revealed through the Holy Scriptures.[450]

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[444] Comm. Romans V. 1.

[445] Cf. Strom. V. 8ff., 14.

[446] Princ. IV. 2:4ff.; Hom. Num. IX. 7.

[447] Comm. Cantic. prol. p. 61-85 (Baehrens G. C. S. ed.); Comm. John I. 20, 27-28; Cels. VI. 2.

Interpreting Genesis I. 26-27, Origen states that man was created in the image of God, but man has not, as yet, attained likeness to God.[451] By this is meant that man's rational soul, his true being, was created in the image of God and has a certain kinship or affinity with God. Created in the image of God, man's rational soul is capable of attaining perfection or likeness to God. However, man's perfection must be acquired through his own personal efforts, through his imitation of God, or more precisely, through his imitation of the Logos.[452] Man, in his original pure state, possessed both the image of God and the ability to know and enjoy God. However, man became weary of contemplating God, became estranged from Him and was clothed in a human body.[453] At that time, man, instead of progressing toward the good and likeness to God, turned to evil and began to take on a resemblance to the devil,[454] but he retained his image of God. This he never loses, for it is his indestructible, immortal, rational soul. When the Logos saw that man, who had been fashioned in his image, had acquired a resemblance to the devil, He was filled with pity and concern. He took the form of man and came down to man, in order to set the example and pattern of life by which man can return to God.[455]

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[448] *Cels*. I. 13; III. 47; VI. 7-8.

[449] *Cels*. III. 58; VI. 13ff.

[450] *Cels*. III. 58.

[451] Ἐποίησε δ'ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ, ἀλλ'οὐχὶ καθ'ὁμοίωσιν ἤδη....*Cels*. IV. 30. This interpretation is also found in *Princ*. III. 6:1; *Comm*. *Romans* IV. 5. Cf. also, *De* *Orat*. XXVII. 2; *Comm*. *John* XX. 22.

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[452] Princ. III. 6:1. Cf. Princ. IV. 4:9-10.

[453] Hom. Gen. I. 13, 15; XIII. 3; Hom. Lev. IV. 3, 7. Cf. also Princ. II. 9:2, 6.

[454] Hom. Gen. I. 15. Cf. Comm. John XX. 22.

[455] Cels. III. 28, 41; Hom. Gen. I. 15; Hom. Num. XXVII. 1.

Ever since the time of the Incarnation, it is possible for man to recover his knowledge of and fellowship with the Logos. This can be accomplished by believing in Christ and by constant imitation of Him.[456]

The journey back to God is long and difficult, for the soul is continually beset by temptations that try to lure it into sin. In order for the goal to be achieved, man's steady and persistent effort is required, together with God's continuous guidance and help. This is similar to Plotinus' concept of divine illumination, in that once man has turned inward, has realized the divine or illuminating power within him and has utilized this power to return to the One, he can through his steady and continuous effort attain the divine object of his quest. According to Origen, man does not possess a sufficiently strong will or the ability to obtain union with God through his own insight or self-knowledge, or by merely imitating Christ.[458] At every step of the way, the soul requires the aid of the Logos, who enlightens the soul in accordance with the soul's maturity and spiritual progress.[459] As the soul advances by successive stages back to God, it is gradually and proportionately endowed with divine grace. It is through the grace of the Logos that the soul is led gradually from a knowledge of self to the battle against sin, to practices of asceticism, to the mystical ascent and finally to union with the Divine.[460] In other words, it is grace that provides the soul first with the moral power with which to struggle against sin; and then with the intellectual insight, the power to perceive and understand fully the work of God, the mystical divine truths which heretofore had been hidden from it.[461]

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[456] *Ibid*.

[457] Cf. *Enn*. I. 6:8-9; also p. 86 above.

[458] *Cels*. VII. 33, 42-44; *De Orat*. XXIX. 19; *Comm. John* II. 8: *Princ*. III. 2:2, 5.

Origen's view of the soul's mystical return to God, its internal spiritual progress, is dealt with extensively in his Homily on Numbers and his Commentary and Homilies

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[459] Ibid.

[460] Hom. Num. XXVII. 1-13; Comm. Cantic. prol.; II. p. 157; III. p. 186 (G. C. S. ed.); Hom. Gen. I. 7, 13.

[461] Ibid.

on the Song of Songs.[462] Of particular interest and importance is the twenty-seventh homily on *Numbers*, in which the author presents the forty-two stages of the soul's ascent from the earthly to the spiritual life. This is set forth through the allegorical interpretation of Israel's exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land.

The first and most important step for the soul, that has chosen to imitate Christ and attain perfection, is to acquire self-knowledge and understanding ("scito te ipsum" vel "cognosce teipsum", "γνῶθι σαυτόν").[463] Origen states that it is of utmost importance that the soul know and understand what it is and how it is moved, or of what substance it is formed and what are its passions and emotions.[464] A similar view is found in Plotinus. According to him, in order for the soul to attain union with the One it must first realize its true essence, the illuminating power of the soul.[465] This can be accomplished by withdrawing into itself and perceiving, acquiring understanding of itself.[466] Only through self-knowledge will the soul discover what it must and must not do, what to improve and what to preserve. As Otis[467] points out, in Origen's mysticism the soul cannot be secure in its vision of God until it understands both its originally divine nature as "logikon" and its tendency towards unstable passions and emotions. It must realize not only its goal, unity with God, but also the paths that keep it from reaching and, above all, from retaining its goal.

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[462] The *Commentary and Homilies on the Song of Songs* is referred to in this work as *Comm.* or *Hom. Canticles*. It is significant to note that Origen was the first theologian to interpret the *Song of Songs* as depicting both the union of the Church with the Logos, and the individual soul with the Logos. Previous to him, Christian commentators had interpreted this work as depicting only the union of the Church and the Logos, and the Hellenistic Jews had interpreted the *Song* to symbolize the alliance of Yahweh with the congregation of Israel; cf. *Canticles Rabbah*. See H. A. Wolfson, *Philo*, Vol. I. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1947), p. 134.

[463] *Comm. Cantic.* II. p. 141; Greek fragment (Baehrens G. C. S. ed.).

When the soul realizes its divine nature, and understands that the true reality lies within it, it recognizes that it must take up the struggle against sin and the passions.[468] The spiritual progress of the soul begins when it starts to detach itself from all externals, from the world's confusion and wickedness and from the passions and affections. The practice of detachment leads the soul to a state of apathy (ἀπάθεια), a state of moral freedom and sovereignty.[469] It is only in a free and uninvolved state, i.e., in a state that is free from the worldly passions and affections and unconcerned with the things of sense, that the soul is capable of confronting its assailants--the powers of evil.[470]

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[464] (anima) quid sit ipsa et qualiter moveatur, id est quid in substantia et quid in affectibus habeat *Comm. Cantic*. II. p. 143 (G. C. S. ed.).

[465] *Enn*. I. 6:9.

[466] Ἄγαγε ἐπὶ σαυτὸν καὶ ἴδε· *Enn*. I. 6:9.

[467] B. Otis, "Cappadocian Thought as a Coherent System," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 12 (1958), p. 102-103, 115.

In Origen's view, detachment from the world includes the renunciation of marriage. He does not reject marriage, but considers the celibate life as superior, and recommends it for the individual who wishes to be a true imitator of Christ.[471] The process of detachment is a period of great danger and difficulty for the soul. The soul is striving to acquire virtue; but to do so it must fight against the devil and the evil powers which are continually trying to deter its progress.[472]

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[468] Hom. Num. XXVII. 6.

[469] Hom. Num. XXVII. 9. Origen's terminology of the passionless life is reminiscent of the Stoic doctrine of ethics, cf. especially Seneca, Nat. Quaest. III. pref. 10-17.

[470] Hom. Num. XXVII. 9.

[471] Hom. Num. XXIV. 2; Comm. Cantic. II. p. 155 (G. C. S. ed.).

The soul's next stage is the acceptance and practice of a life of asceticism. The practices of asceticism should begin on a moderate scale. Excessive abstinance is dangerous in the beginning.[473] As the soul advances in its spiritual ascent, more severe ascetic practices are appropriate. Origen speaks of frequent vigils to weaken the body, severe fasting and continual daily study and meditation of the Scriptures.[474] After passing successfully through these stages, the soul arrives at Beelsephon, translated as watch tower. This means that the soul is now beginning to get a distant view of the splendors that are in store for it. The view increases its hope and strength to continue.[475]

Following this stage, the soul, once again, passes through a difficult period. According to Origen, the times of progress are always the most dangerous. They are always periods of internal conflict for the soul.[476] In the stages that follow, the soul undergoes great spiritual strife. Its rational and irrational part struggle against each other to gain control. During this period, the soul is aided in its efforts by God through spiritual insight and illumination.[477] These the soul receives by means of constant prayer and reading of the Scriptures. The more conflicts and temptations that the soul meets, and the more it strives to overcome them, the more consolation it receives from God. In other words, the soul's knowledge and insight of God increases. As its knowledge of God increases, so does the soul's love for God and its longing for the sight of the divine and the eternal increases. It is this increasing love and longing that enables the soul to successfully overcome the many trials and temptations with which it is confronted, and provides it with the strength and courage to continue the journey. It is necessary for the soul to experience trials and temptations, for only by experiencing and overcoming temptations can the soul attain purification.[478] As Origen allegorically states in his Homily on Numbers, "You (the soul) could not have reached the palm-groves unless you had experienced the harsh trials; you could not have reached the gentle springs without first having to overcome sadness and difficulties."[479]

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[472] Hom. Num. XXVII. 9.

[473] Ibid.

[474] Hom. Exodus XIII. 5; Hom. Jos. XV. 3; Hom. Gen. X. 3.

[475] Hom. Num. V. 3; XXVII. 9. The idea of the watch tower is also found in Plotinus, Enn. IV. 4:5.

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[476] Hom. Num. XXVII. 10.

[477] Hom. Num. XXVII. 11; Comm. Cantic. III. p. 207ff. (G. C. S. ed.).

During this period of trials and temptations, the soul begins to encounter the gift of visions. It is a time when the soul begins to see marked progress in its ascent. It has succeeded in detaching itself considerably from worldly things. However, it is at times still tempted or deceived by material things. Origen states that not all visions are beneficial for the soul. Some are temptations, a wicked angel that is transformed into an angel of light to tempt the soul.[480] For this reason, it is important that the soul be continually alert to discern or classify the visions which appear to it. The soul that has reached the point where it can identify clearly the class to which each vision belongs, will prove that it has reached the spiritual level. Thus, the gift of the discernment of spirits is included with the other spiritual gifts that are bestowed by the Holy Spirit.[481] In other words, the soul must train itself to discern the sources of its thoughts. It must discern between the thoughts coming from God and those coming from the devil, so that it can strive to overcome those thoughts that will lead it to sin.[482]

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[478] Hom. Num. XXVII. 11; Cf. Hom. Luc. XXIX.

[479] Hom. Num. XXVII. 11.

[480] Hom. Num. XXVII. 11.

When the soul has mastered the art of discernment and has begun to judge all things spiritually, i.e., when it follows the dictates of the spirit and not of the body, it has gained supremacy over the bodily passions.[483] The soul has detached itself from the worldly things that are the causes of sin. It is now capable of receiving divine illumination and a more complete understanding of the mysteries and heavenly visions.[484] Complete alienation from the world and its deceptions permits the soul to enter the world of true reality. The soul now arrives at a state of blessedness. In this state the soul receives the complete or perfect vision and understanding of God's works and divine mysteries.[485] In other words, the soul has received true gnosis, it has passed beyond the things of sense to the contemplation of things incorporeal and eternal.

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[481] Ibid. The doctrine of the discernment of spirits is an important factor in Origen's spiritual life. It was adopted from him by the early "heremites", or Fathers of the Desert. The doctrine is carefully described in Princ. III. 2:1-7.

[482] Comm. Cantic. III. (IV.) p. 235ff. (G. C. S. ed.).

[483] Hom. Num. XXVII. 12.

[484] Ibid.

However, although the soul has reached the intelligible universe, the contemplation of incorporeal things, it is still not completely free from the worldly temptations. At several stages in its ascent to the world of true reality, the soul is tempted by worldly things and its patience is tried. Even at the fortieth stage, two stages before the final stage, when the soul is filled with the divine spirit and attains the intuitive contemplative knowledge of the divine realities, it encounters temptation. The possibility of temptation and the lapse of the soul governs, to a great extent, Origen's discussion of the soul's spiritual ascent. Both in the twenty-seventh Homily on Numbers and in the Song of Songs, the works that deal primarily with the soul's ascent, there is a great emphasis on the soul's continual progress, the tendency to lapse and the overcoming of the temptation to lapse. This is emphasized in the First Homily on the Song of Songs. In this work, the bride, as the individual soul, is incessantly finding, losing and recovering the bridegroom, who is the Logos. This is a continuous process, from the bride's first sight of the bridegroom until the final consummation.[486]

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[485] Hom. Num. XXVII. 12; Comm. Matt. XII. 5; Princ. II. 11:7; Comm. Cantic. III. p. 210, 231ff. (G. C. S. ed.)

Further, as the soul advances spiritually, the temptations become fewer, and the strength and protection to fight them greater. Also, the soul is ready and eager to wage war against the evil powers and rulers of this world. This battle will take place not only within the individual soul, but also in the individual's capacity as a minister of Christ. According to Origen, mere contemplation of God is not the ultimate end of the individual who has reached the spiritual level. An individual who has received true knowledge and understanding of God, is required not only to continue his contemplation of God, but also to show others the way to God by becoming His minister.[487] In other words, he should become an example for others to follow through good works and virtuous acts. It is also his responsibility to preach the word of God and to reveal and expound the divine plan concealed within His word.[488]

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[486] See especially Hom. Cantic. I. 7-8. The soul's continual finding, losing and recovering of the Logos is discussed more fully below.

The soul now arrives at the last stages of the contemplative life. It arrives at a state of ecstasy (ἔκστασις), a state in which the soul has acquired self-knowledge and the understanding of true reality. In this stage, the soul has been completely possessed by the Logos and has been transported completely from the things of sense to the things of the spirit. The soul has rid itself of the illusions and deceptions of the material world and has come to realize that the only true world is that of the spirit. It is a complete withdrawal from the things

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[487] *Hom*. *Num*. XXVII. 12.

[488] Cf. *Hom*. *Cantic*. I. 5; II. 11; *Comm*. *Cantic*. III. p.224ff.; also W. Völker, *Vollkommenheitsideal des Origenes* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1931), p. 76ff.

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of sense, and an understanding of the things divine.[489] A similar description of the soul's complete withdrawal from the things of sense and possession by the Divine is also found in Plotinus. He speaks of the last stage of the soul's mystical ascent to the One as a state in which the soul is carried away or possessed by the Divine, leaving behind it all the things of sense. It is a state of ecstasy, a simplification and surrender of the self, an aspiration towards contact which is at once a state of rest and a meditation directed towards perfect conformity or fulfillment.[490]

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[489] ἔκστασιν est, quod dicit contemplatio stuporis, cum in agnitione magnarum et mirabilium rerum mens attonita stupet. Hom. Num. XXVII. 12; cf. τὸ δὲ [τὸ διανοητικὸν] εὐφραῖνον αὐτὸ ὁ ποτιμώτατός ἐστι λόγος, ἐξιστῶν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρωπικῶν καὶ ἐνθουσιᾶν ποιῶν καὶ μεθύειν μέθην οὐκ ἀλόγιστον ἀλλὰ θεῖαν Comm. John I. 30.

[490] Cf. [ἦν] ὥσπερ ἁρπασθεὶς ἢ ἐνθουσιάσας....ἦν.... ἔκστασις καὶ ἅπλωσις καὶ ἐπίδοσις αὑτοῦ καὶ ἔφεσις πρὸς ἁφὴν καὶ στάσις καὶ περινόησις πρὸς ἐφαρμογήν. Enn. VI. 9:11.

Origen states that the soul, having arrived at the state of ecstasy, is ready to unite with the Logos. It has been morally purified and has attained considerable proficiency in discerning and understanding the things of nature and of the divine. The soul thinks only of its love for God, a love that is pure and spiritual, and wishes to unite with Him. It is now ready to fully contemplate the Godhead.[491] The soul has reached the level of the intuitive contemplative knowledge of the Godhead. Origen expresses the relationship between the purified soul and the Logos in terms of a mystical marriage. The soul, as the bride, after much searching and longing, finally finds the bridegroom, the Logos, and enters into union with Him. The soul is now inspired and fully illuminated or enlightened by the Logos Himself, and receives from Him directly the meaning and understanding of the divine judgments and mysteries.[492] However, the soul is not secure in its vision or contemplation of God. It is continually perceiving, losing and recovering the Logos.[493]

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[491] Comm. Cantic. prol. p. 77ff. (Baehrens G. C. S. ed.).

[492] Comm. Cantic. I. p. 90ff. (G. C. S. ed.).

As it has been indicated in the above description of the soul's ascent to God, the journey to the Divine is a very long and difficult one. The soul is continually beset by temptation and sin, and because of its inherent instability, its proneness to lapse, the soul continually vacillates between the visible and the temporal, and the invisible and eternal. The soul's vacillation is emphasized by Origen throughout the *Homily on Numbers* and the *Commentary and Homilies on the Song of Songs*. Thus, the soul's spiritual progress is not steady and continuous, but is one of progression and regression. The soul continually progresses towards God and falls or lapses from Him.[494] However, Origen believes that once the soul has traveled the long, difficult journey of the ascent and has perceived the presence of the Logos, and if it continues to pray to God and to praise Him, it will not fall too far away from God. Origen states that such a soul will not be led around away from the boundary of heaven.[495] In other words, its fall will not be serious, it will fall only a short distance away from God, a distance that is quickly and easily recovered.[496] After great perseverance on the part of the soul and after much searching, finding, losing and recovering of the Logos, the soul will finally unite with the Logos in a perfect and lasting union. At that time, the soul will be completely purified and one with God. The purified soul will no longer be conscious of anything besides or other than God, but will think God and see God and hold God and God will be the mode and measure of its every movement.[497] At this stage, the soul is at peace with itself, completely fulfilled. It is possessed of self-knowledge and is secure in its love of God and its contemplation of Him.[498] Origen prefers to believe that once the soul has attained union with the very essence of the Logos and has become one spirit with Him, it would be bound by the chains of His love that it would not be able ever to move away from Him.[499]

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[493] Deinde conspicit sponsum, qui conspectus abscedit. Et frequenter hoc intoto carmine facit....sponsum mihiadventare conspexi et mecum esse quam plurimum; quo subito recedente invenire non potui, quod quaerebam. Rursum igitur desideroeius adventum et nonmumquam iterum venit; et cum apparuerit meisque fuerit manibus comprehensus, rursus elabitur et, cum fuerit elapsus, a me rursus inquiritur et hoc crebro facit *Hom. Cantic*. I. 7; cf. *Comm. Cantic*. III. p. 217ff. (G. C. S. ed.).

[494] *Comm. Cantic*. III. p. 217ff. (G. C. S. ed.).

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[495] ὅσον γε αἰνοῦμεν αὐτόν, οὐ περιαχθησόμεθα ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ περιφορᾶς, ἀεὶ δὲ πρὸς τῇ θέᾳ ἐσόμεθα τῶν ἀοράτων τοῦ θεοῦ· *Cels*. VI. 20; cf. also *De Orat*. XXV. 2.

[496] *Cels*. VI. 20; *De Orat*. XXV. 2; *Hom*. *Cantic*. I. 7; *Comm*. *Cantic*. III. (IV.) p. 240ff. (G. C. S. ed.).

[497] *Princ*. III. 6:3; II. 11:7.

[498] *Comm*. *Cantic*. III. (IV.) p. 224-228 (G. C. S. ed.).

However, according to Origen, the soul's complete union with God cannot be attained in this life, while the soul is clothed in a human body.[500] Man's bodily nature is an impediment both to the soul's continuing and uninterrupted vision or contemplation of God and its fitness for union with Him.[501] While in the earthly body, the soul is too weak and unstable to attain complete union with God, even for a rare and brief instant. When the soul reaches the contemplative stage, it is aware of the Divine, there is an approach of the Divine to the soul but it stops short of complete oneness or unification.[502] The soul's complete and lasting unity with God can be achieved only after death, and for many souls, whose progress is very slow, unity with God may not even be achieved in this age.[503] Thus, there is no reference in Origen of a mystical union of the soul with the Logos in the present earthly life, as it is found in Plotinus, i.e., a complete oneness or unity of the soul with its object.[504]

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[499] *Comm. Cantic*. I. p. 103 (G. C. S. ed.); cf. also, *Comm. Matt*. XII. 34; *Comm. Romans* IV. 16 (Gk. frag.); V. 10.

[500] non enim possible est hoc humanae naturae *Comm. Cantic*. III. p. 218 (G. C. S. ed.); *Princ*. III. 6:3.

[501] *Ibid*.

[502] Cf. Deinde conspicit sponsum, qui conspectus abscedit. Et frequenter hoc facit...Saepe...sponsum mihi adventare conspexi et mecum esse quam plurimum; quo subito recedente invenire non potui, quod quaerebam. *Hom. Cantic*. I. 7; also (anima) cum vero visitatur a Verbo Dei...stet iuxta parietem vel post parietem, ut neque penitus abscondatur neque omnimodos in promptu sit. *Comm. Cantic*. III. p. 218 (G. C. S. ed.).

Crouzel[505] asks whether it is possible for someone who possessed such insight of the divine, and who introduced much of the language used by later Christian mystics, not to have also experienced the mystical union. He uses as an example a passage in the First Homily on the Song of Songs in which Origen describes his own experience in the search for the Logos. Origen states, "God is my witness that I have often perceived the Bridegroom drawing near me and that he was, as much as it is possible, with me; then suddenly he vanished and I could not find what I was seeking."[506] He adds that this experience has occurred on several occasions. Taken in its context, it appears that Origen, in this passage, is describing the difficulty of the spiritual ascent, the finding and losing of the Bridegroom--Logos, and not a personal mystical experience.

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[503] Princ. II. 11:7; III. 6:1-3.

[504] Cf. Enn. VI. 9:9-11, 7:34-35.

[505] H. Crouzel, Origene et la Connaissance Mystique (Paris: Desclee De Brouwer, 1961), p. 529ff.

[506] Hom. Cantic. I. 7.

It does not appear to be of any great importance whether Origen was, or was not, a practising mystic. What is of great significance is his deep concept and interpretation of the spiritual life, which influenced the thinking of Christian mystics and theologians of later ages.

Origen views the ascent of the soul as a gradual inner, spiritual development of the soul. It is a process by which the soul diligently strives to purify itself, a continual advancement towards the good. First, it purifies itself morally; then, with the grace of God, it develops the sense or knowledge to discern the real from the temporal. As it continues to be illuminated by the Logos, it advances forward until it comes to live purely in the spirit and unites with the Logos. The way by which the soul ascends progressively to God, whether it is the soul's progression in this life from the things of sense to knowledge of God, or whether it is the soul's journey from this life to the life beyond, Origen finds in the Scriptures, set forth in mystical or symbolic terms.

On several occasions, however, Origen speaks of the ascent of the departed souls in terminology reminiscent of contemporary Platonism, and in a somewhat literal sense. He states that after death, the souls of the good ascend through the seven planetary spheres or heavens, becoming more purified as they pass through each sphere or heaven, until they become completely purified and enter into the kingdom of heaven.[507] However, like the description of the soul's ascent set forth in the Homily on Numbers, this concept should not be understood literally. It should be understood as the soul's gradual and progressive spiritual development. Origen states that the Scriptures do not specify seven heavens or planetary spheres, or any definite number of them. Moreover, the concept of the soul's ascent through the heavens is not original or peculiar to the Platonists. A similar conception had been stated earlier by Moses in Genesis 28:12-13, where he describes the dream of the Patriarch Jacob, in which he saw a ladder reaching to heaven and upon which angels of God ascended and descended.[508]

In his defense of Christianity against Celsus' attacks, Origen insists that true knowledge of the way the soul ascends to God is not to be derived from the pagan or mystery cult concepts of the soul's ascent, but from the books of the New and Old Testament.[509] He mentions in particular certain passages as Ezekiel's description of the various gates of his ideal Temple, the account of the heavenly Jerusalem in the Apocalypse of John and the position of the tribes in the book of Numbers.[510] All these passages, mystically or allegorically interpreted, present similar truths of the soul's spiritual ascent to God, truths deeper and more profound than those found in the concepts of the pagans.[511] Thus, although Origen speaks of various heavens or heavenly dwellings, they are not to be understood in a literal sense. According to him, the places and dwellings mentioned in the soul's ascent are symbols of spiritual states, various levels of spirituality or blessedness enjoyed by a soul, in accordance with its degree of purity or spiritual development.[512] The ascending and descending of the soul correspond to its advancing and falling back in the spiritual life.[513]

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[507] Princ. II. 11:6-7; Cels. VI. 20; cf. Numenius, T. 42-43; 46-47.

[508] Cels. VI. 21, 23.

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[509] Cels. VI. 23.

[510] Cels. VI. 23; cf. Hom. Num. I. 3; III. 3; In Jesu Nave XXV. 4.

[511] Cels. VI. 23; cf. Cels. VI. 18; Princ. IV. 3:8-9.

[512] Princ. II. 11:6; IV. 3:8-14; In Jesu Nave XXV. 4; Hom. Num. XXVII. 5; Cels. VII. 29.

According to Origen, the process of the soul's education and purification is a long and gradual one, developing stage by stage in the course of infinite and immeasurable ages.[514] The process is realized in each soul gradually and separately. Thus, the education of the soul is an age-long spiritual adventure, beginning in this life and continuing after death.[515] As it has been mentioned previously, this spiritual adventure is one of continual advancing and falling away from God, a continual ascent and descent of the soul. However, after much striving and after inconceivable periods of time, all souls will be purified and will return to God, and "God will be all in all".[516]

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[513] Princ. IV. 3:10; cf. Exhort. Martyr. 13ff.

[514] Princ. III. 6:6.

[515] Princ. II. 11:6-7; III. 6:6.

[516] Princ. III. 6:1.

PART IV

CONCLUSION

Chapter VIII

A COMPARISON OF PLOTINUS' AND ORIGEN'S DOCTRINE

As has been demonstrated in the preceding chapters, the idea of the individual soul, its origin, nature and return to its divine source by means of true knowledge, is of fundamental importance in the thought of both Plotinus and Origen. Both maintained that the soul belongs to the intelligible world, and both sought, each in his own way, to present a means by which the individual soul of man could return to its true place of residence. Their doctrines of the soul are similar in many aspects, but there are also significant divergences. It is necessary to sketch in broad general terms the common intellectual environment in which Plotinus' and Origen's thought took shape. Moreover, it is necessary to compare the major aspects of the two doctrines, and to determine the possible reasons for the existing differences and similarities and to give a generalized picture of these two doctrines of the soul.

Plotinus and Origen lived at a time which Dodds appropriately calls, "an age of anxiety,"[517] a time of grave moral and material insecurity. This period had its beginning in the early part of the second century of the present era, during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (120 A.D.-180 A.D.), and it continued throughout the third century. During this time, the Roman Empire witnessed great changes, revolutions in social, economic, political and religious conditions. It was an age of endless civil wars, aggressive barbarism, recurring famines and epidemics, increasing economic instability and personal insecurity. Even the State religion, which had served as the basis of the social, political and intellectual life had lost its strength and significance as a result of the cosmopolitanism of the Empire, the fusion of races, cultures, customs and of various streams of religious and philosophical thought. This period of great changes and overwhelming crises produced an intense and personal interest in religion. Man longed for salvation, a release from the burdens of finitude and he searched for an answer to the problem of the soul's salvation. To find the answer to the religious problems of the time, the thinkers of the period turned to the thought of Plato. They believed that Plato's teachings represented a philosophy which satisfied the religious needs of the time. By the latter part of the second century, the

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[517] E. R. Dodds, Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety (Cambridge: The University Press, 1968), p. 3ff.

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Platonic revival had produced a philosophical movement which continued to gain great prominence. Although basically inspired by Plato's thought, Revived or Middle Platonism also included elements of Aristotelian logic, Stoic psychology and ethics and Pythagorean mysticism - these elements present in degrees and in forms varying with the different members of the movement. The central concern of the movement was to solve the problem of man's nature, destiny and salvation.

As exemplified in the thought of two significant representatives, Numenius and Albinus, the Revived or Middle Platonic tradition had arrived at a concept of the human soul that viewed it as a divine being. Man's soul originates in the world of intellect and is a member of the intelligible world. In its original state, the soul exists in a rational god-like state. Being of divine origin, the soul is incorporeal and eternal. It descends from the intelligible world either of its own free will or by the will of a god who sends it. As it descends into the material universe, the rational soul acquires a lower or irrational soul. The irrational soul concerns itself with the things of the body and the sensible world, while the rational soul is concerned with the supra-sensible. The soul's contact with the body causes it to become contaminated and to suffer. It is man's responsibility and his aim in life to realize his true nature as a divine entity, to free himself from the bondage of the body and to return to his god-like state. This can be accomplished by purifying himself through the practice of the cardinal virtues and the study of philosophy. Thus, he will arrive at knowledge of the things divine and prepare himself for final disembodiment, a return to his original god-like state and the vision of the Supreme Divinity.

The period of anxiety which had its beginning in the second century continued throughout the third century, the time of Plotinus and Origen. As this period continued, so did the concern with man's soul. Thus, Plotinus' and Origen's main concern was the problem of man, his nature and destiny. Moreover, both men shared the Revived Platonic tradition of the time. However, it appeared in a different form in their writings. Each man adopted certain of the popular Platonic concepts, analyzed them, re-interpreted them and produced an individual thought. Plotinus reshaped the Platonic ideas into a new pagan thought. Origen, the defender of Christianity, employed the Platonic concepts to express his Christian thought in an intelligible manner. He adopted the Platonic views that could be used to serve as possible means for the explication of the Christian account of God and man, his nature and destiny. These concepts he revised and reshaped to agree with his understanding of the Christian beliefs. Thus, many of the same or similar Platonic elements appear in the thought of both Plotinus and Origen. However, they appear in different forms, each form was strongly affected by the individual's mold--pagan or Christian.

Both Plotinus and Origen believed that the rational soul of man is a participant in the divine eternal world. The soul had its origin outside of time, in the realm of the intelligible or divine.[518] However, there is a difference between Plotinus and Origen in the status of the soul as it participates in the Divine, in the nature of the soul's participation in its transcendent source. According to Plotinus, man's rational soul is a direct emanation of the Divine essence. It is a part of the divine world, a being on the lowest divine level, and thus in continuous and direct relationship with the Divine Intellect.[519] As a Christian, influenced by the Biblical category of creation, Origen could not accept such an exalted view of man, i.e., that man's rational soul is a part of the divine world in direct association with the Divine essence. However, he found in the rational interpretation of the

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[518] *Enn*. IV. 4:15ff.; *Princ*. I. 4:3-5.

[519] τῇ θειοτέρᾳ φύσει συγγενὴς ἡ ψυχὴ....θείων μετὸν αὐτῷ [τὰ θεῖα] διὰ συγγένειαν καὶ τὸ ὁμοούσιον......... *Enn*. IV. 7:15; cf. IV. 3:5, 4:14-15; I. 1:10; II. 9:2.

Biblical concept of man's creation the basis of the soul's participation in the Divine.

According to Origen, man's rational soul is a created being, although created outside of time, it is nonetheless created. Thus it is unstable, subject to change and alteration,[520] whereas the Divine essence is simple, uncreated and eternally changeless.[521] Therefore, the human soul is not of the same essence as the Divine,[522] but it is capable of sharing or participating in the divine essence.[523] Interpreting the Scriptural doctrine of man's creation, Origen states that man's rational soul was created by God in His image.[524] As an image of God, the soul has a certain kinship or affinity with God.[525] It is capable, if it wills, of perceiving and understanding the intelligible divine truth and through the imitation of the Logos is capable of attaining perfection and likeness to God.[526] Thus, by interpreting rationally the Scriptural doctrine of man's image of God, Origen can speak of the soul's sharing or participating in its Divine source, in a manner similar to that of Plotinus and the other Platonists of the time. His view is a modification of the Platonic concept, altered to agree with the Biblical concept of man as Origen understood it.

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[520] *Princ*. II. 9:2.

[521] *Princ*. I. 1:4-7; *Comm*. *John* I. 20ff.; *Cels*. IV. 14.

[522] ἐπιστήσωμεν δὲ..... ἐστὶν ἀσεβὲς ὁμοούσιον τῇ ἀγεννήτῳ φύσει *Comm*. *John* XIII. 25.

[523] *Princ*. IV. 4:9-10; *Comm*. *John* I. 34; II. 3; VI. 38.

[524] *Cels*. IV. 30; *Princ*. III. 6:1; *Comm*. *John* XX. 20.

[525] [οὐσία] λογικῆς ψυχῆς, ὡς ἐχούσης τι συγγενὲς θεῶ· *Exhort*. *Martyr*. 47; also, *Cels*. III. 40; *Princ*. IV. 4:9-10.

[526] *Exhort*. *Martyr*. 47; *Cels*. VI. 63; *Princ*. IV. 4:9-10.

Plotinus and Origen believed that in their original state all souls were pure rational beings, "logoi" or "logika", alike and equal, in contemplation of the Divine Intellect and in perfect communion with it.[527] However, these rational beings turned away from the contemplation of the Good and assumed material bodies. The fall of the rational beings is considered by both Plotinus and Origen as an unavoidable consequence. Plotinus considers the fall of the rational beings both as a cosmological necessity and as a voluntary inclination of the soul toward that which is void and vain. The embodiment of the rational spirit is necessary for its own development and for the creation and perfection of the Cosmos. However, it is also a fall, a voluntary, self-alienation of the soul from the Good.[528]

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[527] Enn. IV. 3:5, 8:4; V. 1:1-2; Princ. II. 9:1, 6; IV. 4:9.

[528] Enn. IV. 8:1, 5.

As has been indicated above, Plotinus never reconciles these two views satisfactorily.[529] Origen attributes the fall of the souls to their created or generative nature. The fall or lapse of the "logika" is a natural consequence of their generated nature. By the very fact that they did not exist and then began to exist, souls are of necessity subject to change and alteration; they possess an inherent instability or changeability.[530] It is their inherent instability which caused the souls to make the wrong choice, to neglect God and thus to fall away from Him and into evil. Origen holds the created beings morally responsible for the fall, but he also considers the fall as an unavoidable consequence of their genetic instability and ignorance.[531] Origen's view of the rational beings and his adherence to the Christian/Biblical conception of God as a spiritual personality caused Origen to present a different view of the creation of the material world than that found in Plotinus. He believed that the cosmos is an act of God's will and goodness, created for the purpose of educating the souls, and not a cosmological necessity of the unfolding of His essence as Plotinus believed.[532] Origen's cosmological view is an adaptation of the popular Platonic view, re-interpreted to fit a Christian scheme of the creation and fall.

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[529] See above, p. 45-46.

[530] Princ. II. 9:2.

[531] Ibid.

Created in the image of God and capable of participating in the divine essence, the soul is immaterial and immortal or eternal. In strikingly similar terms, both men stress the non-materiality and immortality of the soul. Both Plotinus and Origen argue against the Stoic doctrine that the soul is composed of a fiery material substance or "pneuma", and against the Epicurean theory of the soul as a compound of lifeless atoms or entities.[533] They claim body or material nature is unstable, in a perpetual state of flux and transformation and subject to dissolution.[534]

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[532] Princ. II. 1:1, 2; III. 5:4-5; Cels. VII. 50; Comm. John XIX. 22; cf. Enn. V. 1:6; IV. 3:9, 10, 8:7, 8.

[533] Enn. IV. 7:2-8; Cels. IV. 13-14; Cels. VI. 71; Princ. I. 1:1ff.

[534] [σῶμα] ῥεῖ γὰρ καὶ ἐν φορᾷ αὐτοῦ ἡ ρύσις καὶ ἀπόλοιτο Enn. IV. 7:3, also 7:8, 3:26; III. 1:3. Cf. τῷ ῥευστὰ εἶναι πάντα τὰ σώματα φθίνοντα παρακολουθητικὴν ἔχει τὴν ἐν τῷ φθίνειν κίνησιν De. Orat. VI. 1; also Comm. John XIII. 33.

It is inanimate, possessing no life of its own nor capable of producing life.[535] Soul, on the other hand, is the author or principal of life,[536] and the structuring force of the body. Therefore, the soul must be non-material and imperishable.[537] Moreover, the soul is not susceptible to quantitative increase, decrease or division as is bodily or material nature.[538] The growth and perfection of the soul does not come through material substance, but through mental activity, intellectual knowledge which is incorporeal.[539] Thus, the soul must be of a nature superior to that of body. Both men deny that a corporeal entity could discern and understand incorporeal things, such as spiritual and abstract concepts.[540] Similar arguments concerning the non-corporeality of the soul are found in the writing of the Middle Platonists, Numenius and Albinus. Numenius claims that the soul, as the animating and organizing principal of the changeable and infinitely divisible body, must be incorporeal. He also argues that the soul's nourishment and perfection is derived from the incorporeal sciences, knowledge of which it receives from the Divinity. Thus, the soul must be incorporeal.[541] Albinus also stresses the soul's unchangeableness as proof of its incorporeality, and that it is perceptible only to the mind.[542]

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[535] *Princ*. III. 4:2; *Cels*. III. 42.

[536] [φυχὴ] τὸ χορηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς *Enn*. IV. 7:3. Cf. [φυχὴ] πάσης ζωῆς χορηγῶ *Cels*. VIII. 19.

[537] *Enn*. IV. 7:3; *Cels*. VII. 32; VIII. 19; *Princ*. I. 1:6.

[538] *Enn*. IV. 7:5; *Princ*. I. 1:6.

[539] *Enn*. V. 1:3; *Princ*. I. 1:6; *Comm*. *John* XIII. 33.

[540] *Enn*. IV. 7:6; *Princ*. I. 1:7.

Concerning the immortality or eternality of the soul, both Plotinus and Origen urge as their main argument the consideration that the rational part of the soul is capable of perceiving and contemplating the eternal divine realities. Since the soul possesses the ability to perceive and contemplate the divine truths, it must also be eternal, a participant of the Divine Intellect, capable of knowing and enjoying the supreme Divinity.[543] Further proof of the soul's eternality is the premise that the soul is distinct and separable from the earthly body, and that it possesses the faculty of recollection.[544] Virtually identical arguments are also found in Numenius[545] and Albinus.[546]

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[541] Fr. 13, 23, 24; T. 29, 39. See above, pp. 14-15.

[542] *Did*. 25:33. See above, p. 25.

[543] *Enn*. IV. 7:15; *Princ*. IV. 4:9-10.

[544] *Enn*. IV. 3:26, 27, 7:11-13; *Cels*. VII. 5, 32; *Princ*. II. 3:2, 10:4.

Plotinus and Origen teach that although the soul is in itself incorporeal, since its initial fall from the intelligible world, it has a continual relation with body or matter. However, in Plotinus' view it is possible for a completely purified soul to free itself completely from all bodily matter. Both men accepted the Platonic hypothesis of the celestial or ethereal body, which was popular at the time.[547] According to Plotinus, the soul is enveloped by a celestial or ethereal body in the heavenly regions, immediately upon its descent from the intelligible universe.[548] Plotinus calls this body "pneuma", and describes it as diaphanous and luminous.[549] According to him, this body contains within it the vegetative principle, and it is by means of the celestial body that the soul proceeds into a more earthly body.[550] Although it is not clearly stated in

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[545] Fr. 13, 23, 24; T. 29, 39.

[546] *Did*. 25:33, 34.

[547] Cf. E. R. Dodds' edition of Proclus, *The Elements of Theology* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1963), Appendix II.

[548] *Enn*. IV. 3:15.

[549] *Enn*. IV. 4:26.

[550] *Enn*. IV. 3:9, 15, 4:26.

Plotinus, it appears that the "pneuma" or ethereal body of the soul survives the death of the earthly body and re-ascends with the soul to the heavenly regions.[551] The soul with its ethereal body remains in the heavenly regions until the proper time when it is reincarnated in a new earthly body. It is only the completely purified soul, one that is ready to rejoin the world of Nous, that can discard the ethereal body in its re-ascent through the heavenly regions, to the intelligible world.[552] As has been mentioned previously, the idea of the celestial body is of little philosophical value in Plotinus' thought. It is used primarily as an attempt to connect or bridge the gap between the pure soul and the earthly body.

The concept of the ethereal body is more clearly developed in Origen, and of greater importance to his thought than to Plotinus'. His view of the body-soul relationship was influenced not only by the Platonic ideas of his day, but also by the Judaic-Christian concept of eschatology and the resurrection of the body. Thus, Origen's view of man is more unitary than Plotinus'. He perceives man as a single whole, of which the body is as much a part as the soul. Although he did not fully agree with the Church's popular conception of the resurrection of the body, he was determined to defend the Christian doctrine against pagan criticisms by presenting an interpretation of the doctrine that would be comprehensible to the pagans, but one that would also be basically true to the Christian tradition, as he understood it.[553] Origen's concern was to explain the truth against (1) the popular conception which understood the resurrection of the body as a literal resuscitation of the animal or earthly body, and (2) the heretical view of extreme spiritualism, which excluded the resurrection of the body, and thus its salvation.[554] However, Origen also wanted to establish the individual identity of the spiritual resurrected body with its animal or earthly body. The Platonic theory of the celestial or ethereal body provided him with a theoretical framework within which he could state a doctrine of the resurrected body. Origen adopted the theory and reshaped it to agree with his understanding of the Christian belief of the resurrected body.

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[551] Enn. IV. 3:9; III. 6:5.

[552] Enn. IV. 3:24; III. 6:5.

Origen teaches that the soul is in its own nature incorporeal.[555] However, it can not exist without a body.[556]

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[553] *Cels*. V. 14-24; VII. 32; VIII. 49; *In Psalm*. I. 5.

[554] *Cels*. V. 14, 18; *Princ*. II. 10:1ff.; III. 6:5ff.

[555] ἡ τῇ ἑαυτῆς φύσει ἀσώματος καὶ ἀδρατος φυχή *Cels*. VII. 32; also *Princ*. I. 7:1; II. 2:2; IV. 3:15.

[556] *Ibid*.

He firmly asserts that no rational spirit other than the Holy Trinity can live apart from a body.[557] Before their fall away from God, the "logika" did not possess bodies. However, since their fall, no rational being has existed or can exist apart from a body.[558] The body is permanently attached to the soul, and like it lasts eternally. According to Origen, the material substratum of the body is of such a nature that it can undergo every type of transformation.[559] It changes in quality and texture in accordance with the dignity and perfection of the soul with which it is joined.[560] The body can change from a fine, ethereal nature in its pure spiritual state, to one of a coarser and more solid state. However, it can also return to its original fine, ethereal and invisible nature.[561] Thus, there exists a common element between the present animal body and the future spiritual body. It is the same body which will be resurrected at the last day, only the quality of the material will be transformed to make the body suitable to the nature of the spiritual environment.[562] Moreover, Origen maintains that each body possesses within itself a distinctive or characteristic form or "eidos", which gives to each body its individual and distinctive characteristics.[563] Unlike the material substratum of the body, which is continually changing, the "eidos" of the body remains eternally unchanged.[564] It is the individual form found in each body that will resuscitate the body at the time of the resurrection.[565] Therefore, the resurrected body will not only be the same as the animal or earthly body but of a finer more ethereal quality than the earthly body, it will also possess the same individuality as the animal body of its earthly existence. According to Origen, the resurrected body will be identical to the earthly body, but of a different quality of material. It will be of a spiritual quality, of a purity and clarity suitable to the nature of the spiritual environment.[566] Thus, Origen revised the Platonic concept of the ethereal body to present a comprehensible view of the resurrected body, intelligible to his pagan contemporaries and fundamentally true to the Christian view as he understood it.

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[557] Princ. I. 6:4; II. 2:1-2; IV. 3:15.

[558] Princ. II. 2:2, 3:2; IV. 3:15.

[559] Princ. I. 6:4; II. 2:1-2; IV. 3:15; Cels. VII. 32.

[560] Cels. III. 41ff.; IV. 56ff.; VI. 77; VII. 32; Princ. II. 1:4, 2:2, 3:2.

[561] Ibid. A similar idea, in a more literal sense is found in the thought of Numenius, T. 47. According to him, the soul acquires various grades of body as it descends through the planetary spheres. These it discards as it purifies itself and re-ascends to the intelligible universe. The idea is also suggested by Albinus, Did. 16:28.

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[562] Princ. I. 8:4; II. 2:2, 10:1, 3; III. 6:4-6; Cels. VII. 32.

[563] In Psalm. I. 5.

[564] Ibid.

[565] Princ. II. 10-3; In Psalm. I. 5; Cels. V. 18-24.

As has been indicated in the preceding discussion, Origen's assertion that no rational spirit, since the fall from God, can exist without a body is necessary to his view of the resurrected body. However, it appears to be inconsistent with his statement that the end or consummation will be like the beginning.[567] This implies that the rational spirits will return to their original disembodied state; this is not so. In the end the rational spirits will return to their original state of purity and equality but they will possess a body, a pure, spiritual and ethereal body.[568]

Adhering to the Platonic doctrine of "assimilation to God", both Plotinus and Origen maintain that the world of sense is alien to the soul and a hindrance to the soul's realization of its true divine nature. According to both, man's aim should be to free himself from the things of sense, to realize his divine nature as "logos" or "logikos" and strive to regain his place in the divine. Man's rational soul, his true being, possesses within itself the power and desire for communion with the Divine. Thus, man is capable, if he wills, of attaining perfection and regaining his original state of purity.[569]

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[566] Princ. I. 8:4; II. 2:2, 10:1-3; III. 6:4-6; Cels. III. 41ff.; IV. 56ff.

[567] Princ. I. 6:2.

[568] Cf. Princ. III. 6:1ff.

According to Plotinus, man's rational or higher soul remains always in the intelligible world, in continuous and direct contemplation of the intelligible realities.[570] It remains eternally stable and impassable, untouched by the passions, sins and suffering, which are a part of the sensible world.[571] Eternally maintained in the intelligible universe and in constant communion with the One, the rational soul continually receives from the One, through the eternal and spontaneous emanation of its energy, the power to return to the world of intellect. In its process of creative emanation, the One gives to the soul the movement and the power to return to its source.[572] Thus, the continuous illumination of the soul by the One provides the soul with the desire and the power necessary to achieve redemption. Man needs only to turn inward, to recognize this impulse and power within him and to willingly and conscientiously utilize this power, which is always present to the soul, to pursue the necessary moral and intellectual discipline involved in the process of purification.[573] Through moral training, philosophical reflection and the study of the sciences, the soul gradually attains knowledge of the Good and ascends to the intelligible world.[574] The culminating stage in the soul's ascent and purification is the vision or appearance of the One. It is a conscious awareness in the soul of the Divine presence which is eternally present within it, the ultimate awakening and realization of the soul to its true nature.[575] Because of the rigorous intellectual and moral training necessary to purify the soul, few individuals experience this vision, and then only on rare occasions. However, the vision or appearance of the One comes naturally to anyone who is properly prepared to receive it.[576] This is similar to Origen's view in which he maintains that it requires man's steady and persistent effort, together with God's continuous grace and guidance, in order for the soul to regain its original state of purity.

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[569] Enn. I. 6:8; IV. 9:4, 8; Comm. John II. 3; Princ. III. 6:1; IV. 4:9-10.

[570] Enn. II. 9:2.

[571] Enn. IV. 8:8; V. 1:10; VI. 4:14.

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[572] Enn. V. 6:5; VI. 7:22, 31, 35.

[573] Enn. I. 6:8ff.; VI. 5:1, 9:4-8.

[574] Enn. VI. 7:36.

[575] Enn. VI. 7:35-36, 9:4, 11.

As it has been indicated above, Origen also believed that man's rational soul is capable of participating in the divine life. As an image of the Divine Wisdom, the rational soul is able, if it wills, to perceive and understand the divine intelligible truths.[577] However, as a Christian, Origen could not accept the notion that man's true self is by nature eternally pure, not subject to change and instability, and is incapable of sin and suffering. According to him, it is the whole or entire soul that has fallen and is in need of purification. It is the entire soul which, as a created or generated being, is mutable, provisional, incomplete and dependent. All that the soul possesses is due to God's power or will, and it requires God's constant and continuous grace to be held in its being and to its spiritual status. The soul's unstable nature and its dependency on God's grace is of major significance in Origen's discussion of the soul's spiritual ascent.[578] Therefore, unlike the Plotinian soul, there is no "part" of the soul in Origen which possesses goodness inherently. The soul is given a share in goodness by God's grace in accordance with the soul's development and capacity to receive it.

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[576] Enn. VI. 9:4.

[577] Princ. IV. 4:9-10; Exhort. Martyr. 47; Cels. VI. 63.

In like fashion to Plotinus, Origen claims that the ability, the power and the movement or desire to return to God has been inherently implanted in man's soul by God from the beginning.[579] As in Plotinus, Origen states that it is the responsibility of the individual soul to recognize this power within it and by means of this power to strive conscientiously to attain the world of intelligible realities.[580] However, because of the soul's changeable and unstable nature, the realization and utilization of the divine power implanted in it is not sufficient for the soul to attain communion with God. The soul must also realize and understand its instability and its dependence on God's grace for its being and salvation and turn to Him for help.[581] When the soul has accomplished this, it begins to receive God's individual guidance, His personal or individual acts of grace which guide the soul through the various phases of the ascent to God in accordance with the soul's maturity and spiritual progress.[582] According to Origen, the soul's perfection and union with God are acquired through the soul's conscientious efforts and imitation of the Logos in conjunction with the individual help and guidance of the Logos. It is the Logos that provides the soul first with the moral power with which to battle against sin, and then with an increase in intellectual insight as it advances towards God, where it perceives and understands the mystical divine truths which heretofore had been hidden from it.[583]

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[578] Especially in *Comm*. *Cantic*. and the twenty-seventh *Homily on Numbers*.

[579] κατασκευάζων ἡμᾶς ἐνεποίει πόθον τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν εὐσεβείας καὶ κοινωνίας......*Exhort*. *Martyr*. 47; Quod desiderium, quem amorem sine dubio a Deo nobis insitum credimus *Princ*. II. 11:4ff.; cf. *Comm*. *Cantic*. I. p. 91 (G. C. S. ed.); cf. *Enn*. VI. 7:31.

[580] *Comm*. *Cantic*. II. p. 141 (G. C. S. ed.).

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[581] Cels. VII. 42ff.; cf. IV. 50; Comm. Cantic. II. p. 143ff. (G. C. S. ed.).

[582] Cels. VII. 33, 43-44; Princ. IV. 4:9-10.

[583] Hom. Num. XXVII. 1-13; Hom. Gen. I. 7, 13; Comm. Cantic. prol.; II. p. 157 (G. C. S. ed.); III. p. 186 (G. C. S. ed.).

According to Origen, God, by means of the Logos, reveals Himself both in history and in the inner life of the individual. God reveals Himself through the Holy Scriptures and to each individual that seeks Him, in accordance with the individual's capacity to receive Him.[584] Thus, unlike Plotinus and the other Platonists, Origen maintains that salvation is available to all men, not only to those who are intellectually capable.[585] According to Origen, there is a means of salvation available to all men, according to each individual's needs and degree of insight.

Although the means by which the individual soul attains true knowledge differs in the thought of Plotinus and Origen, the ultimate goal is the same, the soul's mystical union with the Divine. Both men express the relationship of the soul with the Divine in terms of a mystical marriage. Both Plotinus and Origen employ the Platonic myth of Eros and Psyche as found in the Symposium.[586] After much searching and longing for the Good, the soul unites with it in a union which Plotinus and

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[584] Cels. I. 9ff.; VI. 2; VII. 42, 43, 46, 49, 60.

[585] Cels. I. 9; VI. 2; VII. 47, 59-61.

[586] Cf. Symp. 203Bff.

Origen compare with the union of earthly lovers.[587] At this stage, the soul has withdrawn completely from the things of sense, has realized itself fully and has come to perceive and understand the eternal divine realities. This is the goal of man's existence, the end of life's journey.[588] According to Plotinus, the last stage of the mystical experience is the complete union of the soul with the One. This is a state in which the soul has turned completely inward, its pleasures and happiness now come from within and it has been freed from everything alien. The things of sense have been relegated to the position of mere accessories. The soul has become one with the Divine.[589] As previously stated, this does not mean that the soul has become identical with the One but that it has realized its true nature and has been completely fulfilled by the One.[590] Plotinus claims that it is possible for a purified soul to arrive at complete unification with the One while it is still in the earthly body. However, while in the body, this experience is achieved on very rare occasions and is of a very brief duration. Final and permanent union with the One is possible only after death, when the soul is completely free from the body.[591]

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[587] Enn. VI. 7:34, 9:9; Comm. Cantic. prol. p. 65ff. (G. C. S. ed.).

[588] Enn. VI. 9:10ff.; Comm. Cantic. III. p. 216-228 (G. C. S. ed.).

[589] [φυχή], ἰδοῦσα δὲ ἐν αὐτῇ ἐξαίφνης φανέντα- μεταξὺ γὰρ οὐδὲν οὐδ'ἔτι δύο, αλλ'ἓν ἄμφω·οὐ γὰρ ἂν διακρίναις ἔτι, ἕως πάρεστι:... οὔτε σώματος ἔτι αἰσθάνεται, ὅτι ἐστὶν ἐν αὐτῷ, οὔτε ἑαυτὴν ἄλλο τι λέγει, οὐκ ἄνθρωπον, οὐκ ὂν οὐδὲ πᾶν:.. Enn. VI. 7:34; cf. VI. 7:35-36, 9:10-11; IV. 8:1.

[590] Ibid.

In language similar to Plotinus', Origen describes the final union of the soul with God as a stage in which the soul will no longer be conscious of anything other than God, but will think God and hold God and God will be the mode and measure of its every movement; and in this way God will be all to it.[592] However, unlike Plotinus, Origen nowhere speaks of a oneness or unity of the soul, embodied in an earthly body, with the Divine. According to him, the soul that has reached the contemplative stage has an awareness of the Divine, there is an approach of the Divine to the soul but it stops just short of complete oneness or unification.[593] While in the earthly body, the soul is too weak and unstable to attain complete union with God, even for a rare and brief instant. The earthly body is an impediment both to the soul's continuing and uninterrupted contemplation of God and its fitness for union with Him.[594] Thus, according to Origen, complete and lasting union of the soul with the Divine can only be achieved in the life hereafter.[595]

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[591] Enn. VI. 9:10.

[592] rationabilis mens...necultra jam aliud aliquid nisi Deum videat, Deum teneat, omnis motus qui Deus modus et mensura sit; et ita erit omnia Deus. Princ. III. 6:3; Comm. Cantic. III. (IV.) p. 225ff. (G. C. S. ed.). Cf. Enn. VI. 7:34, see footnote 589 above.

Thus, from a common Platonic tradition there emerged two views of man's nature and destiny, a pagan view and a Christian view. These views contained many similarities but also contained several significant differences. Plotinus, the pagan Platonist, adopted certain elements of the tradition, reinterpreted and reshaped them and developed an exalted view of man. According to him, man is in a sense divine, a member of the intelligible universe, and the goal of man's existence should be to understand this divinity and to restore it to itsproper relationship in the divine world. Man's true self, his rational or higher soul, is a part of the divine world, a stable impassable, immortal, incorporeal divine entity, uncreated and existing before all time and eternally maintained in the intelligible universe and in constant communion with the Divine. An image or "logos" of the higher soul descends into the material universe and into an earthly body for the purpose of bringing the work of intellect, order and perfection, to the lower orders of the Cosmos. Thus man possesses a two-fold personality, a "part" of him is maintained in the world of intellect and a "part" of him joins with the body to form a composite entity.

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[593] Cf. Deinde conspicit sponsum, qui conspectus abscedit. Et frequenter hoc facit...Saepe...sponsum mihi adventare conspexi et mecum esse quam plurimum; quo subito recedente invenire non potui, quod quaerebam. Hom. Cantic. I. 7; also (anima) cum vero visitatur a Verbo Dei...stet iuxta parietem vel post parietem, ut neque penitus abscondatur neque omnimodos in promptu sit. Comm. Cantic. III. p. 218 (G. C. S. ed.).

[594] ...istam perfectionem, as beatitudinem rationabilium creaturarum, vel naturarum, ita demum quidom permanere in eodum statu...id est ut Deum omnia habeant, et Deus iis sit omnia, si nullatenus eas societas naturae corporalis amoveat. Princ. III. 6:3; cf. Comm. Cantic. III. p. 218 (G. C. S. ed.).

[595] Princ. III. 6:1-3; cf. II. 11:7.

The human body has its place and function in the hierarchical structure of the universe, but it is not an intrinsic or essential part of man. It is considered on the whole as a hinderance and an obstacle to man in his progress towards realizing his goal, knowledge of and unity with its divine source. Thus, the human body has no part in man's salvation. The object of man is to purify himself through virtue and philosophy and thus prepare for complete disembodiment in the life hereafter, and return to his divine source.

Origen's view of man was influenced not only by the Platonic tradition of his day but also by the Biblical/Christian concept of man. Thus, his view is a combination of the Biblical/Christian views of man and an adaptation and modification of the Platonic elements which could be used to explain the Biblical/Christian view of man as he understood it. Origen developed a unitary and less exalted view of man. He perceives man as a single whole, a psycho-physical organism of which body is as much a part as the soul, but the soul is superior to the body and independent of it. Adhering to the Biblical story of creation, Origen states that the human soul is a created being, created in God's image and from all eternity. As such, it has a certain kinship with God. It is immortal, incorporeal and capable of participating in the divine life, but it is not of God's essence. As a created being the whole soul is basically unstable and changeable and in continuous need of God's help and guidance.

The soul's descent into the material universe and its embodiment in an earthly or material body is a temporary and provisional state and due to the soul's estrangement from God. Man's aim in life should be to purify himself from the things of sense and return to fellowship with God. This can be accomplished through faith in Christ and diligent imitation of Him, who guides the soul in its return to God. Salvation for Origen implies not only purification of the soul, but also of the body. The quality and texture of the body alters in accordance with the dignity and perfection of the soul with which it is joined. In the end, at the restoration of all things, the pure spirits will possess pure, spiritual and ethereal bodies.

As the above discussion indicates, many of Plotinus' and Origen's concepts of the soul are more developed and systemized views of those found in the writings of the Middle-Platonists, Numenius and Albinus. In recent years, many scholars have attempted to trace the doctrines of Plotinus and Origen to a common source. They attribute their views to the teachings of Ammonius Saccas, whose lectures both men attended at different times.[596] Scholars attempt to accomplish this either by comparing the similarities between Plotinus' and Origen's views,[597] or by

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[596] Porphyry, Life, ch. 3; Eus. H. E., VI. 19:5, 13.

[597] This has been attempted by R. Cadiou, Origen, His Life at Alexandria, trans. J. A. Southwell (London: B. Herder Book Co., 1944) pp. 166-185; K. H. E. deJong, Plotinus of Ammonius Saccas? (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1941); H.-R. Schwyzer, "Plotinos," Paulys Realencyklopadie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft, XXI., 1 1951, cols. 479ff.

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comparing the views of either man with the doctrines of Ammonius Saccas.[598] However, all knowledge of Ammonius' teachings is indirect and vague. Scholars have reconstructed his system from secondary transcripts of his doctrines. These consist of excerpts made by Photius of a treatise by Hierocles,[599] a fifth century Platonist, in which certain concepts on Providence, the soul and the cosmos are attributed to Ammonius; and a late fifth century treatise of Nemesius, bishop of Emesa, in which some theories of Ammonius are summarized.[600] In essence, the information derived from these sources concerning Ammonius' teachings is as follows: (1) that the soul is incorporeal;[601] and

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[598] Cf. especially, F. Heineman, "Ammonius Sakkas und der Neuplatonismus," *Hermes*, 61 (1926), pp. 1-27; H. Dorrie, "Ammonios, der Lehrer Plotins," *Hermes*, 83 (1955), pp. 439-78; H. Langerbeck, "The Philosophy of Ammonius Saccas," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 77 (1957), pp. 67-74; W. Theiler, "Ammonios der Lehrer des Origenes," *Forschungen zum Neuplatonismus*, Bd. X. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter Co., 1966), pp. 1-45; K. O. Weber, "Origenes der Neuplatonkier," Zetemata, Heft 27 (München: C. H. Beck Co., 1962).

[599] Cod. 251 (460b-466b), I. Bekker, ed. *Photii Bibliotheca* (Berlin: C. Reimeri, 1824); cf. codex 214 (171b-173b), which consists of a summary of Hierocles lost work *On Providence*.

[600] Nemesius, *On the Nature of Man*, ch. 2 (=Numenius T. 29).

[601] *Ibid*.

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(2) that Plato and Aristotle were fundamentally in agreement.[602] This information is much too vague on which to establish a specific conclusion. Furthermore, as Dodds[603] and Armstrong[604] point out, the views allegedly held by Ammonius are neither original nor unique to a third century Platonist. They are fairly normal and commonplace. Thus, because of the brief knowledge of his teachings, it is difficult to determine with any certainty what influence Ammonius had on the thought of Plotinus and Origen.

Solmsen,[605] on the other hand, believes that in determining the sources and influences of Origen's thought, attention should be given to the Alexandrian tradition of Christian Platonists. According to him, this tradition has been totally neglected.[606] In his article, Solmsen attempts to remedy this. He analyzes and compares the basic concepts of Providence and the individual soul as found in Clement of Alexandria's Stromateis VII. 6:1-15:4 and Origen's De Principiis. Solmsen then traces the similarities existing between these two doctrines to Plato's Book X. of the Laws, to which Clement and Origen appear to be greatly indebted. From this he concludes that it is possible (1) that Origen may have known Clement personally and may have "studied" with him; or (2) that Clement's and Origen's views may have been inspired by the Alexandrian tradition of Christian Platonists, which may have been strongly influenced by the Platonic teachings of Providence, as described in Laws X.[607] Solmsen's study presents some very interesting hypotheses. His theories appear more conclusive and are more readily substantiated than the hypotheses that have evolved from the studies of Ammonius. However, as Solmsen himself states, the views he expresses are merely hypotheses. They require more extensive research and investigation before any definite conclusions can be made. Nevertheless, Solmsen's study has produced some very interesting and significant possibilities, worthy of serious consideration and further investigation.

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[602] Photius, Bibl. Cod. 251 (461a), Bekker ed.

[603] E. R. Dodds, "Numenius and Ammonius," Entretiens Hardt, Tome V.: Les Sources de Plotin (Vandoeuvres-Geneve, 1960), p. 25-26.

[604] A. H. Armstrong, "Plotinus," The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy (Cambridge: The University Press, 1967), p. 197.

[605] F. Solmsen, "Providence and the Souls: A Platonic Chapter in Clement of Alexandria," Museum Helveticum, 26 (1969), pp. 229-251.

[606] Ibid., pp. 230-231.

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[607] Solmsen, "Providence and the Souls," p. 249-250.

Thus, all that can be stated with certainty about Plotinus' and Origen's thought is that it was influenced by the popular Platonic concepts of the time. The many similarities in their thought and the parallels in subject matter are due to the fact that both men were drawing from a common tradition to solve a similar set of problems. Both men were deeply concerned with the question of the individual soul, its origin, its nature and the means of its return, through knowledge, to unity with its divine source.